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AUGUST

1952



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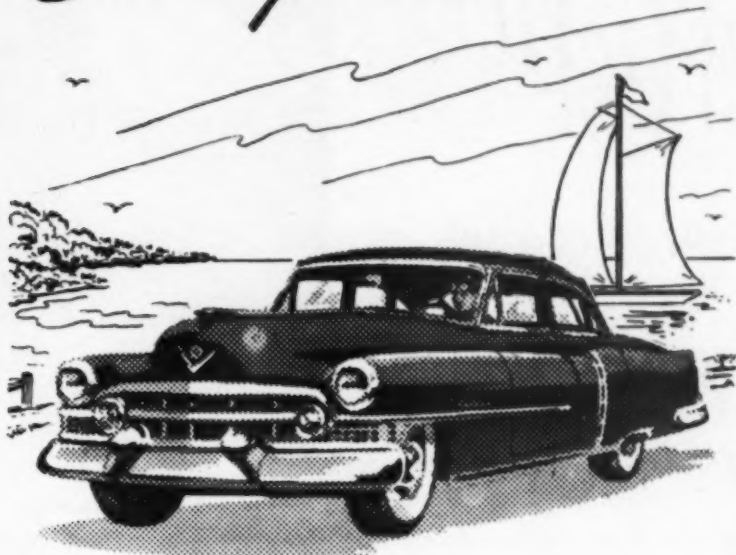
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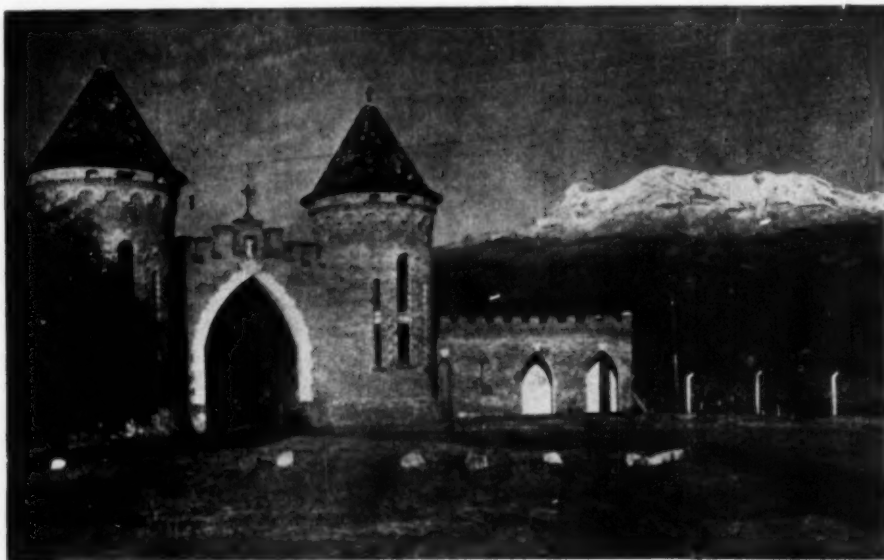
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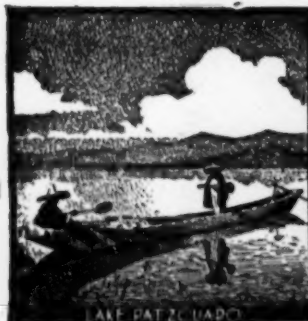
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HOWARD S. PHILLIPS

EDITOR

The Fruit of an Educational Crusade

EIGHT years have gone by since President Avila Camacho issued his momentous decree which imposed upon every literate Mexican citizen the obligation to teach at least one illiterate Mexican to read and write. The aim pursued by the President was to stamp out illiteracy in a briefest period of time by way of mobilizing the entire nation in a vast educational crusade.

We might assume that in launching this decree President Avila Camacho undoubtedly conceded that its full and successful application was impossible, that its complete enforcement was beyond official control. For, assuredly, to convert some eight or ten million men and women overnight into altruistic improvised pedagogues—to mobilize a nation made up of widely heterogeneous social sectors and individualistically minded people for a task of this nature was a highly complicated project. At best, the final success of this decree had to depend upon voluntary patriotic response rather than a sense of legal obligation.

Being obviously aware of the unavoidable obstacles, the President was probably actuated by the hope that his decree would be amply justified even if it achieved only partial success. For its veritable significance rested in the fact that it aroused general attention to the imperative need of stamping out illiteracy, of attacking a basic evil, of seeking the active help of everyone in eradicating the nation's gravest social problem.

What Avila Camacho actually sought was to arouse among the people of Mexico a sense of civic duty and common purpose. He understood that in order to evolve national unity, cohesion and complete homogeneity, in order to realize the ideal of political democracy and to elevate the masses of its population to a higher moral and material standard, Mexico must free itself of illiteracy. He wished to imbue every Mexican with the conviction that his own individual welfare would be enhanced by the improvement in the living conditions of all the others.

The government of President Alemán has continued and intensified the task begun by Avila Camacho; and while signal progress has been made, the final goal has not been reached. The efforts of two administrations have not sufficed to liquidate the problem, and the crusade will have to be continued by following administrations through years to come.

During the past five years and a half the campaign emerged from its initial phase of direct instruction from person to person and has been conducted upon a more firmly organized plan. The Ministry of Public Education created numerous centers where large groups of adults are taught in class-rooms. Pursuing at the same time the twofold aim of literacy as well as of national integration, specially formulated methods and bilingual textbooks combining Spanish with Ma-

ya, Tarascan, Otomi, Nahuatl and other indigenous languages, are being employed by the teachers in regions where Spanish is yet largely unknown.

* * *

In concrete figures these are the results obtained in the course of the past eight years: During the administration of President Avila Camacho the Ministry of Public Education spent in this campaign 5,232,525 pesos, which imparted literacy to 829,089 persons. In the subsequent five years of the present administration the above Ministry spent a total of 21,147,285.50 pesos on the enlightenment of 2,153,519 illiterates. With additional funds contributed by state and municipal governments for this cause, the campaign, since its initiation in 1944, has represented a total expenditure of 32,372,821.10 pesos, with the net result that 2,981,605 persons have been taught to read and write.

In order to appreciate the full significance of the final figure it is well to recall that it represents approximately fifteen percent of Mexico's entire adult population. And yet, despite these encouraging facts, the complete solution of the problem is not within the foreseeable future, for the reason that while the number of adult illiterates is diminishing a new illiterate generation of children is growing up due to an acute shortage of schools. For, indeed, official figures reveal that although most cities have a sufficient number of schools to provide for their needs, the lack of schools in the poorly communicated rural districts still leaves approximately fifty percent of the country's scholastic population without the means of elementary education.

With a federal appropriation of 430 million pesos—the second largest allotment in the federal budget—destined this year for the needs of public education, a considerable part of which being spent on the creation of schools, it is obvious that the government is doing the utmost to confront the problem. Unfortunately, however, the limited scope of the national budget, which must provide for the extensive constructive programs of all the other ministries, perforce restricts the appropriation for public education. The problem, moreover, is further accentuated by the extremely rapid growth of the country's population. Thus, the campaign against illiteracy must involve the teaching of adults as well as the creation of thousands of new schools for the young.

The proportions of the task that yet must be done are truly formidable. But the splendid progress of the foregone eight years sets the pace for the future, and the will to achieve which is so clearly manifest in every phase of national existence must encounter the means of continued and accelerated progress.

Silver Merchants

By Sylvia Martin

THERE are many ways of making a living. You can—like Señor Abe, Cuernavaca's one Japanese—buy a run-down colonial house and install a family in each of its rooms. In the patio you build a snaky wooden outhouse, a shower, and a stone laundry basin. The rents you charge are small, but their total adds up to an astronomical profit. This is smart business the world over.

On the other hand, you might be a craftsman just out of apprenticeship, looking for a cheap place to set up your workshop. What could be better than the big patio of a slum dwelling? The tenants don't mind; you and your men workers provide a center of interest. The children, who learn their responsibilities early, are no nuisance. The patio is roofless, but the weather is as well behaved as the children. And Señor Abe is happy to see the bare stone tiles earn money. All is well—no?

"Of all the ways to make money," cries Efraim González, "I have chosen the wrong one!"

Maestro of the workshop in the slum patio, Efraim is one of the hundreds of small craftsmen who turn out the silver trinkets which tourists, Mexican and foreign alike, buy in the plazas, markets, and curio shops. He is not an artist and does not pretend to be one.

"I am a businessman," he says. "Everybody knows that one is safe with silver. I was careful when I chose what I would do. I examined many things, and I knew in the end, as in the beginning, that nothing was so certain as silver. But last week I look at my accounts, and what do I find? Two hundred pairs of earrings have brought me a profit of only fourteen pesos!"

Too preoccupied to catch the smile of the girl filling her bucket at the stone basin, he studies the toes of his natty brown and white sport shoes and shakes his head over them. "The cost of crude and sheet silver has been rising. We small men are finished. I am young. I can begin again in something else.

But I do not understand. Real estate, now, that is speculation. But silver was so safe! Times change, and men are uprooted...."

Efraim's problem is only the latest chapter in a very old story. In the epic of silver, security has had small place.

Before the Spaniards conquered Mexico, the Indians were mining gold and silver which they used for ornaments. To the business-minded Spaniards, these metals were pretty in another way. They were wealth. Indians were driven into the mines as slaves, and the precious metals flowed out to create the uneasy glory of empire.

Silver became so important to the empire that the Spanish ships which carried the bullion, to be harassed on the high seas by pirates and privateers, were known as the plate fleets—from plata, Spanish for silver. From the rich mines of Guanajuato, Zacatecas, and Taxco, the silver was sent to Veracruz on the Gulf to be loaded. The ships sailed to Havana, where they joined forces with those bringing the wealth of Peru, and were convoyed together to Spain by an escort of armed galleons.

Silver also went out another way. A trail wandered from the capital to the port of Acapulco, a trail like a snarled length of thread. Through the Pedregal wasteland it went South and into the mountains, sliding down to the subtropics of Morelos, then up into the cold again, where Taxco sits on its rocky perch, down into the Tierra Caliente, up, down—and so at long last to the blue border of the Pacific.

White sails appeared over the rim of the sea. Up the trail sped the good word: "The Manila galleon!" In the capital, gentlemen and rogues committed their souls to God and set out. A good part of the wealth of Mexico wound over that treacherous road to the port, to be traded for the spices, cottons, silks, and porcelains of the Orient carried in Spanish bottoms.

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Water Color.

By Arthur Faber.



Picher-vase from Azcapotzalco.

Painted tripod vase. Red on cream.

Archaic vase from Oaxaca.

(Photos by the author, courtesy of the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research).

The Pottery of Ancient Mexico

By Frederick A. Peterson

THE most valuable material known to students of Mexican archaeology is of the least commercial value. It has been used in all lands for thousands of years, and is still in use in all countries. This precious material consists of the ground that we walk upon, in which we bury our dead, and from which we get our sustenance. But when this material, which we call "common" is properly wet, mixed, patted, modelled, decorated and fired it becomes an artifact that laughs at the centuries, and unfeelingly watches its maker disintegrate into dust, which is in turn perhaps destined to go into the making of some other artifact.

Baked clay becomes the plate that an emperor ate from. Mud, modelled by loving hands and put into a hot oven, becomes a lovely woman, with all or the tempting curves in their proper places, and with perhaps even a few improvements added, which is made to be put into the grave of some dead lover, to accompany him to his final destination.

This material, when properly baked, will last for thousands of years, barring natural accidents such as earthquakes or destruction due to burial in extremely acid soils, or destruction of savage heedless men. It will remain in its original form waiting for some plowman to unearth it, pick it up and take it home to his children for a plaything. Perhaps some homespun philosopher will see it and take it home to study and to ponder on the possibility of immortality which is there expressed.

Baked clay is many things to the trained observer: it is a clock, a book of history, the vanity of a struggling group of people, a preserved bit of human progress, a notebook which records migrations, trade and destruction. It is a page on which one may read various things: someone's dreams, religious conformity and upheaval, mighty battles, conquest, submission, degeneration. It is a frozen moment in which one can

watch a mother cry, a lover sigh, a priest chant, a child play, and other important climaxes of daily life.

Practical minded people can see, without overstretching the imagination, how people, thousands of years ago, dressed, ate, scratched themselves, made love, raised children, patted their dogs, built their homes, went hunting, ground corn, made war, painted their bodies, fixed their hair, and met death.

The archaeologist, by carefully recording the three-dimensional position of this material when he stumbles onto it, can find out what history books, lost or unwritten, might tell. In a few days he may cover hundreds of years of history and trace the progress of a people, from birth to death, and from a more impartial standpoint than even the wisest of the wise men of that vanished people. A visit, or a letter, to any museum director or librarian will bring the names of authors who describe in detail the exact manner and details of this proceeding for those who wish to know more.

The great number and variety of forms of pottery found in all parts of Mexico continually amazes and delights those who seek it. The business of making pottery was evidently a major industry of pre-Hispanic Mexico. It had to satisfy the demand, not only of the thousands of households, but of temple and palace as well.

A delightful custom, for the present day collector, was the habit which the people of the Valley of Mexico had of breaking their pottery at fifty-two year intervals, and burying the pieces in large ditches, in a sacred ritual related to the passage of time. To find one of these ancient rubbish heaps today is one of the most thrilling and rewarding of treasure hunts.

Not even the prolific and inventive Chinese potters have surpassed the Mexicans in the variety of forms and experimental techniques. The Greeks, Romans and Egyptians did not surpass the Mexicans in



Incised Olla with floral pattern.

sheer beauty of form, color and design. The only way in which the Mexicans have been clearly surpassed is in the method of firing their pottery. They never achieved very high heat in their comparatively primitive and inefficient kilns. Their pottery was, in comparison, poorly fired, although there are a few isolated instances of perfectly fired rock-hard pottery. One of these types, called "Cerro Montoso" is a creamy pottery giving a satisfactory ring, like that of porcelain, when tapped with the finger.

When the Spanish came to Mexico they brought with them the art of glazing. Glaze was previously unknown to Mexico, but was not especially missed because they used what is called "slip." This was applied by dipping the finished clay bowl or sculpture into a liquid mud bath, which is a suspension of very fine clay in water. This "slip" then ran into all of the pores of the clay piece, and made it leak-proof. The slip was usually polished and gave the piece a shiny appearance, sometimes almost metallic. Sometimes the polishing was so well done, that it is difficult

Eligly speckled vase, from Oaxaca.



to believe that the vessel is made of such humble material.

In addition to the primary form many techniques were applied to beautify the pottery. Lines could be cut in the clay by means of obsidian blades, or other sharp objects, either before or after firing. Sometimes complete scenes were formed by cutting away parts of the surface of the vessel, in either positive or negative designs. Grooves and flutings were applied when the vessel was still wet, and channels of varying depth and direction were made by means of sticks, pebbles or by the fingers. Sometimes designs were applied to the wet clay with a seal or stamp. Often little buttons and strips of clay were applied to the main mass while it was still wet. This process is called, "appliqué" or "pastillaje." Decoration could also be modelled directly on, or from, the main mass by the fingers, at times aided by tools. At other times decorations were cast in a mold, and then stuck on to the main mass. Various rough materials that could leave their prints in the wet clay were applied, in a process called, "texturing." Favorite materials were grass, matting, twigs, textiles and rope.

* * *

Various shapes of sticks were pressed into the wet clay to make round, triangular, oval, wedge, rectangular and other shaped impressions. A comb, or like instrument could be run over the surface of the wet vessel to produce a series of parallel straight or wavy lines. Sometimes decoration was applied by heavy polishing in such a manner that the polishing formed definite patterns; parallel lines, criss-cross lines, wavy lines, and so on. This was usually done with pebbles or sticks.

Besides these additive and subtractive techniques of decoration the ancient potters also depended a great deal on the use of paint to increase the eye-appeal of their work. Paint was applied to the clay either while it was still wet, when dry but before it was fired, or after it was fired. It was also applied at times to a coating of stucco covering the vessel. It was also applied as a dry powder which was rubbed into grooves and crevices of the vessel.

One strange technique was that called the "lost wax process." This name does not mean that the se-

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Bird with open beak, from Chupicuaro.



Among the Guests

By Dane Chandos

WE had another sudden influx of guests at the inn, among them Eliot and Verna, friends of mine who had visited me some years before in Ajijie. They liked the place much better now that there were a number of foreigners here. This is Eliot's second quick trip through Mexico, and he talks like an old hand. If only someone would set up a drug store at every corner and keep all the Mexicans as a sort of decorative background, Eliot would love the country. Verna is still worried because so many things need a lick of paint, but she is pleased with the social progress of the region and feels that now it is only a matter of time for there to be some women's clubs. They had arrived late at night, and hardly were we settled in the patio with drinks and sandwiches when there was a knock at the street door.

"Señor," announced Cayetano. "Says a gentleman that he would like to stay the night. He is carrying two pistols and is a general."

I went to the door myself.

"But señor," said the General when I explained that I was full up, "at the boardinghouse in Chapala the beds are of bamboo, without mattress coverings. I could not sleep."

I told him I had only one small bedroom left and that it was being used as a storage cupboard.

"You are all amiability, señor. My chauffeur shall bring in my things."

He was determined to stay, so I told Cayetano to make up the bed. The room looked very small with the sacks, the empty rum puncheons, the shelves of canned goods, and the old beehive in it. A double line of tiny ants was going and coming between the honey and the window and I am pretty sure I saw a mouse scutter behind the sacks. But the General seemed not to notice. His chauffeur brought in a big suitcase, and when the General was settled, I told the chauffeur where to go in the village, said good night to them both, and went to rejoin my friends.

"You're very trusting," said Eliot, who has seldom trusted anybody and is a rich man, "leaving him with all those supplies."

"Well, I think it's fun," said Verna, her bright blue eyes gleaming with interest. "I hope we'll meet him in the morning. That's about the only thing we haven't seen in Mexico, a general. Are their generals as ramshackle as everything else?"

The next morning the General was down early. He was wearing a seersucker suit and he carried a big violet silk handkerchief in one hand and a big black cigar in the other. He made a hearty breakfast of cereal, eggs, steak and onions, fish, beans, and bananas. Verna came in, smart and well put together as she always is even at breakfast, and the general leaped to his feet and kissed her hand when I presented him, running his eye slowly, flatteringly, from her shoes to



On.

By Campe Rivero.

her face. Verna has a number of personalities, which she uses like gloves, and she slipped on her sophisticated lady number. In no time the breakfast table was littered with wit and swimming in charm.

Eliot came in. He is by nature genial, and he holds that good temper is good business, but he doesn't really think that anyone or anything outside the United States is worth much, though of course there have been ingenious freaks, like Shakespeare or Venice, and more money should have been put into both. He always carries a thousand-dollar bill in his pocket, which he is ready to invest in anything that strikes him as a good bet. His hunches are almost always sound, though once he found himself landed with a timber concession in a part of Campeche, inaccessible by road, rail, air, or water. I wondered how he would take to the General. But the General had summed him up in a twinkling and behaved to him as one man in authority to another slightly superior to himself in rank. Verna changed into her magnate's-wife personality, and Eliot's geniality took the form of asking the General innumerable questions about the Mexican Army. They got on like a house on fire, went everywhere together, agreed that everything should be organized on a bigger scale, and decided to give an enormous, joint cocktail party. I removed fragile objects and wide-branching flowers from the terrace and shut up the dogs and the badger. It was just as well, for Minou the cat, arriving with the calm proprietary air cats have, was seized and forcibly given a mouthful of milk strongly laced with tequila, very properly scratching her tormentors to the bone.

Halfway through the party, a Mrs. Cafferty arrived with a letter of introduction to me from somebody in Guadalajara. She nodded to Eliot and, ignoring the General's offer of his chair, settled herself comfortably next to me.

"Now this is really delightful," she said. "When I travel, I'm not one of those people who likes to see a country through plate glass. I like to plunge in, if you know what I mean, plunge in up to the neck."

She patted her neck, as if to show where, beneath

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Partial view of the new Airport at Guadalajara.

Mexico Creates its Civil Aviation

By Harry L. Donovan

IN THE nation-wide constructive program carried out during the past six years by the government of President Alemán, communication, with the largest appropriation in the federal budget, has been assigned a place of salient prominence. The unprecedented economic development of Mexico during these past six years would have indeed been impossible without the signal achievement of the Secretariat of Communications and Public Works under the able direction of Lic. Agustín García López.

And in reviewing this achievement we find that the notable progress made during this period in the field of civil aviation comprises one of its most brilliant phases. This progress, defining a thoroughly formulated plan, required at the outset the revision of extant and no longer adequate laws. The formulated plan required a new legal structure.

Hence a new Law of Civil Aviation was promulgated on the 22nd of February, 1950, consisting of fifteen regulations. Its basic premise is the recognition of full sovereignty of the Mexican Republic over the space above its national territory and territorial waters.

The law, moreover, determines the legal status of an aircraft commandant, rendering his position equivalent to that which in accord with Maritime Rights corresponds a captain of a merchant ship, and

deals with the following additional important points: The obligation on the part of the state to assure the security and efficiency of air navigation within its territorial limits, especially as regards the flights by concessionary companies which devote themselves to passenger transport; the principle of equitable reciprocity in international matters, sustained by Mexico in various international conferences; the responsibilities for damages incurred by air transport companies; the norms applicable to the investigation of accidents and activities of search and salvage; and as the means of safeguarding human life and property, the obligatory use of aeronautic communication services, meteorological services of air traffic control, radio aides and other auxiliaries, wherewith, and by Presidential accord, the coordination and unification of all such companies which maintain these installations has been officially ordered and incorporated. This organization, operating under the direct supervision of the Secretariat of Communications and Public Works, by the name of Radio Aeronautica Mexicana, S. A. de C. V., applies the tariffs and methods approved by the above Secretariat.

To achieve a full enforcement of the new law and to enlarge the scope of its functions, the former Department of Civil Aeronautics has been elevated to the status of a Direction, beginning with January First of the current year.



Section of the Passenger Waiting Hall at the new Guadalajara Airport.

The network of federal airports has been maintained in a state of utmost security and comfort through the vigilance of a newly created corps of Aeronautic Police.

* * *

During the present year the various civil aviation munications and Public Works has constructed airports in the cities of Guadalajara, Nogales, Hermosillo, La Paz, Tijuana, San Luis Potosí, Tepic, Martínez de la Torre and Reynosa. These have been planned along ultra-modern designs and are equipped with all the necessary installations. New airports are being, moreover, constructed at this time at León, Campeche, and Puerto Marquez, while rehabilitation and improvement has been carried out at the airports of Mazatlán, Pié de la Cuesta, Costa Chica, Zihuatanejo, Villahermosa, Ciudad Altamirano, and the Central Airport of Mexico City, where a new and spacious passenger station has been constructed.

The concessioned air routes have been extended by 38,876 kilometers, or from 120,864 kilometers in 1946 to 159,740 kilometers at this date. 7,131 licenses have been issued to ground and flight personnel and to aviation technicians, while a total of 46,356 licenses have been revalidated.

During the present year the various civil aviation companies operating in the Republic have flown 46,349,718 kilometers over their respective routes, employing 182,236 hours to transport 1,088,591 passengers. The important growth of this traffic during the past six years is revealed in the comparative figures for the year 1946, which were 32,620,642 kilometers of flight in 135,120 hours, transporting 528,098 passengers. This growth reflects the wider public prefer-

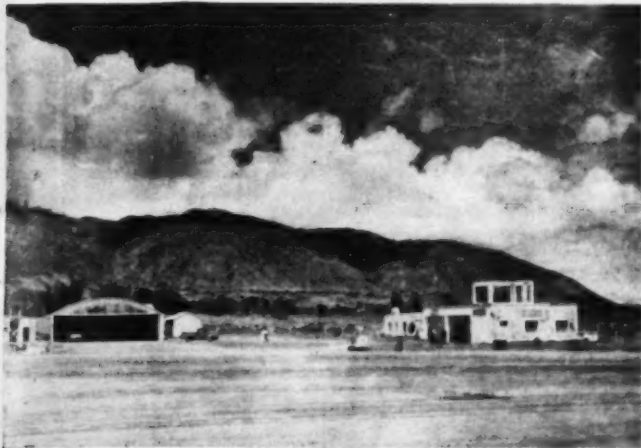
ence for air travel and the speed and security it represents today, which have been markedly enhanced by the measures adapted by the present government.

* * *

The following schools for civil aviators are functioning in the Republic at this time: the Instituto Aereo Nacional and the Escuela Nacional de Aviación, in the Federal District; the Escuela para Mecánicos de Aviación Jose Gonzalez Beytia, in Merida, Yucatán, and the Escuela Civil de Aviación 5 de Mayo, in Puebla, Pue. The latter school, recently reorganized and conducted by the Secretariat of Communications, has turned out one hundred and five civil aviation pilots since it inaugurated its courses on May 5th of 1947, the majority of whom are lending their services to commercial air-transport companies. Eight Stearman, ten Cessna, and six Luscombe planes were acquired for the use of this school.

Always adhering to the principle of reciprocity, the government of Mexico has entered into the following bilateral agreements: with Portugal, obtaining commercial privileges in the route Mexico, D. F.-Miami-Bermudas-Azores-Lisbon and viceversa, in exchange for similar rights for the above country; with France, authorizing the establishment of air transport services between Mexico, D. F., and Paris; with Holland, for the establishment of air transport from Amsterdam to Mexico City, in reciprocity whereof Holland extended to Mexico the right to establish such services by a Mexican aviation company, between Mexico City and Holland via Aruba or Curacao. Moreover, negotiations have been initiated for the signing of bilateral agreements with Canada, Cuba, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Venezuela, the United Kingdom of Great Britain, Norway, and the Philippine Republic.

Hangar and Offices at the Tepic Airport.



Main runway at the Nogales Airport.





View of the grounds at the Masatlán Airport, with the Passenger Station in the background.



Panoramic view of the grounds at the Guadalajara Airport.

Mexico was chosen as the seat for the gathering of the Seventh Conference of the Juridic Committee of the International Organization of Civil Aviation, which took place in this city from the 2nd to the 23rd of January, 1951, and was duly represented in the various other conferences of this organization held at Brussels, Geneva, Lisbon, Montreal and Taormina.

As pointed out above, the impulse lent to the de-

velopment of civil aviation is but one of the conspicuous phases in the vast constructive task achieved by the Secretariat of Communications and Public Works under the guidance of its chief, Lic. Agustín García López, a task which on the other hand defines one of the most brilliant phases in the unparalleled constructive program achieved by the administration of President Alemán.

GROWTH OF CIVIL AVIATION IN MEXICO FROM 1940 ON

	1940	1946	1952
KILOMETERS IN EXPLOTATION	46,996	120,864	159,740
KILOMETERS FLOWN	7,899,020	32,620,642	46,349,718
HOURS OF FLIGHT	13,410	135,120	182,236
PASSENGERS TRANSPORTED	89,242	528,098	1,088,591
KILOGRAMS OF CORRESPONDENCE TRANSPORTED	289,904	561,752	2,677,026
KILOGRAMS OF BAGGAGE TRANSPORTED	1,049,903	6,461,981	20,981,610
KILOGRAMS OF EXPRESS AND FREIGHT TRANSPORTED	3,889,975	8,282,662	43,351,781
EFFECTED FLIGHTS	29,429	62,598	65,246
LICENSES EXTENDED TO PILOTS AND TECHNICAL AERONAUTIC PERSONNEL	263	1,606	720
LICENSES REVALIDATED	328	2,582	2,717
FEDERAL AIRPORTS IN OPERATION	1	2	13
AIRPORTS OF COMMERCIAL AVIATION			
AIRPORTS OF COMMERCIAL AVIATION COMPANIES IN OPERATION	0	8	50

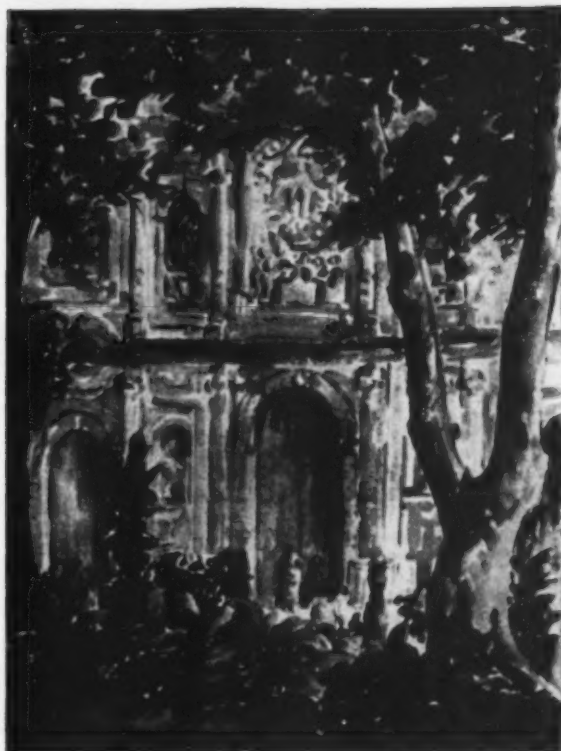
Oaxaca

By Hudson Strade

THERE are mockers who look at you accusingly when they learn that you are not traveling "like the people," and demand, "How can you really see Mexico if you don't travel second-class?" When they learn that you fly expeditiously in cool comfort instead of in prolonged perspiring discomfort, they curl their lips as if they had uncovered an impostor.

"What can you see from an airplane?" the resentful train travelers had scoffed often enough. This July morning, flying from Mexico City to Oaxaca, we saw at close range a cluster of three volcanoes, the most magnificent specimens in the Northern continent. I had seen them before in various aspects from the ground and from the air, but never had I been so close to them. They flashed upon the visual faculties in rapid succession like electric volts of beauty. At 8:45 the plane rose from the earth toward the unblemished azure of the Mexican sky. In five more minutes we were as close to Popocatepetl as a plane could approach safely; and in another ten minutes there was the climatic peak of Orizaba, refulgent under the golden sun. The White Lady, with the fantastic name Ixtacihuatl, lay in eternal siesta, like some pale Norse goddess shrouded in snow-white samite and sprinkled with diamond dust. The glittering Popo had defied death for centuries, and now from time to time it would breathe out a warning sulphurous smoke like an old dragon dying. Only a few weeks before, a party of venturesome Europeans had met a ghastly fate by taking liberties with the snow-crowned Popo. To give his guests a rare treat and let them glimpse hell-fire at the source, a titled host had flown his plane directly over the gaping crater. Popo had sucked the plane and all its sensation-seeking passengers down into its brimstone maw. The witless mystagogue and the ladies and gentlemen with him paid dearly for nosing into the mysteries of a smoldering volcano.

At exactly half-past nine the best view of Orizaba was to be had. Citlaltepētl, "The Mountain of the Star," as the Indians called Orizaba, rose from the tropical earth nearer heaven than any volcano on the continent. Serene in its pride of place, it is the first of the three volcanoes to catch the rays of the sun rising out of the Atlantic. Its thick cone, encased in tons of unmelting snow, looked as smooth as the white-marble flank of some archangel chiseled by Michelangelo. Every high mountain, according to an old French saying, is a sermon which directs the human



CATHEDRAL AT OAXACA. Water Color.

By Clara Thorward.

soul to Heaven, and a peak, as Lamartine observed, gives point to the sermon. The dullest clod could not but be impressed by this glittering masterpiece of creation. Rising eighteen thousand seven hundred feet, it yet surpassed other peaks in grandeur, more by its classical form than by its height. With its snow whiter than swan's-down or a gardenia petal, it reflected such illumination from the sun that it seemed to rival the source of light in brilliance. As the plane passed, a cloud flung itself like a garland against the dazzling white-marble dome, as if to prevent man from looking too long on beauty unbearably refulgent.

Within a few minutes our eyes had been enriched by an essence of beauty that a thousand railway journeys in Mexico could not equal in their sum of delights. We had been fortunate to behold the three chief jewels in Mexico's treasure house in a brief quarter of an hour. Often they were veiled by mist, and particularly in the summer season. But beauty is inherently evanescent in any case. Climaxes cannot be continuous. One cannot look at the same scene for hours on end and remain in a state of exaltation. There must be an element of freshness and surprise in the impact.

When the volcanoes disappeared, we settled back in our seats under their spell and rested our eyes. The rest of the way to Oaxaca lay above mountains that looked rough and forbidding, without any spectacular sights. A fuzz of trees covered the mountainsides like a green mold. The occasional patches of yellow-green cornfields and the naked outlines of mud-house village suggested tiny floating islands in the grand tumbling sea of forest trees. A train crept like a black snake toward the south—the direction in which we were headed. Had the winged plane been an eagle, it might have swooped down and carried the thing off wriggling in its talons.

From the upper air, the Valley of Oaxaca, encircled by a ring of verdant hills, resembles an amphi-

theater of jadeite. At the foot of one curve of it lies the town called Oaxaca, the capital of the state with the same name, which means "Covered with Calabash" or "The Place with Gourds." The surrounding mountains are of gentle contour, protective rather than awe-inspiring. The tones of green range from dark jade to pale willow. Lavender-green shadows mark the ravines. The radiance of midmorning sun lay like a glory upon the valley. It gave the earth a kind of pastoral serenity. In selecting the ennobling title which the King of Spain bestowed upon him, Hernán Cortés had asked to be called El Marqués del Valle de Oaxaca. If the conquistador or conquistadors could only have conquered his own compulsion to explore and have settled on his vast Oaxaca estates, including threescore towns, his last years might have been graciously contenting. Instead, he had continued to venture and seek, to squabble and be rebuffed, at last to die of a bitter heart back in Spain before he was old in years.

In pre-Cortésian centuries, this green jewel of a valley, which Cortés renounced for the glitter of false El Dorados, had nurtured a culture that was responsible for the temples of Mitla and goldsmiths of Monte Albán. The city had been the birthplace of the boy child whose name was to be the best known of all Mexicans in the world capitals at the end of the nineteenth century—Porfirio Díaz. Among these hills, the great patriot Benito Juárez had tended sheep as an unlettered Indian lad while dreaming vague dreams of democracy.

* * *

The inhabitants of Oaxaca dwell in a fertile and salubrious climate. At a mile above the level of the sea, they are neither plagued with extremes of heat nor do they know the sorrows of winter. The thermometer never varies more than 13° Fahrenheit. The average temperature stands at that perfect for mankind, 70°. Rainfall can be depended upon, and is abundant, yet discreet. Occasionally to make the Oaxaqueños more thankful for their daily blessing, nature has sent earthquakes to trouble the ground. To meet nature's challenge, the builders have made their walls doubly thick. So one gets an immediate impression that Oaxaca is a town of heavy stone and reinforced masonry. But in the Moorish manner, towers and domes rise to break the monotony of flat roofs and earth-hugging houses. The general color tone of Oaxaca is green, just as in Morelia it is pink, because in Oaxaca the stone of the regional quarries is greenish.

Green and thick-walled, the city is very old, and colonial in flavor. In the 1480's, about the time Cortés was born in Spain, Aztec warriors of Montezuma's Emperor uncle founded the town, because of gold deposits discovered near by. By a decree of Charles V, Oaxaca was declared a ciudad on July 6, 1529, in the very same edict that created Hernán Cortés Marqués del Valle de Oaxaca. Its growth was rapid. Already by 1532, according to an old chronicle, there resided in Oaxaca, besides the thousands of Indians, "five hundred Castilian families of pure blood, without an African, a Jew, or a Turk among them."

In Oaxaca today, more than in any other town or city of Mexico, life centers about the plaza. The focus is really a double plaza, or a plaza and a brief alameda, with the cathedral dominating one side of one and one side of the other. But it is not the venerable edifice, begun in 1553, that attracts. It is the dark-green laurel trees planted three centuries ago and the faded portales, noble in design and rich in shade. There are abundant benches under the trees and hundreds of tables on the sidewalks of the cafés. From a seat at a café table, you have a panoramic view more interesting and colorful, if less sophisticated, than from any

boulevard of Paris. The atmosphere is amiable, and relaxed, with none of that tension in the street crowd that is found in Mexico City. Indians of two tribes, Zapotec and Mixtec, circulate among the arched shops or sit in contented ease on the stone benches under the laurels that rise to a height of sixty feet. The faces and hands of some have been baked to the rich color of cinnamon by the heat of thousands of afternoons of working under the sun. A few of them carry folded across their shoulders the famous white-and-blue serapes of the district.

Deep in the shadows of the portales are the stations of the scribes, who write letters at the hesitant dictation of the illiterate. From the expressions on the dark faces intent on the effort of forming sentences, one can often tell when the letter is of love or longing, of reproach, or begging extension of credit. With faces as noncommittal as a talking-machine record at rest, the scribe sets down the proposal of marriage, the expression of sympathy over the death of a parent, or the tale of woe about agricultural mishaps.

Peripatetic bootblacks seek custom and enjoy their novitiate in meeting the ways of the world. Itinerant peddlers pass with trays of notions, and flower girls, with baskets of blossoms. Sepia-colored soldiers go by in twos or threes, their uniforms the dusty gray-green of the native stone of Oaxaca. Their eyes follow the full-skirted flower girls or those with short skirts going home from their work in a ceramic factory or an office. The limousine of the governor stops before the governor's mansion that extends the length of a block. A humble cortege, following with lighted candles the manborne casket of a child, passes into the cathedral. Men showing off in the open-air shooting gallery do not pause in their aiming and firing to glance at the funeral procession. An ancient victrola, minus the rubber tires, passes with an aristocratic old lady, her white hair as elaborately coiffed as if she were on her way to be presented to Maximilian and Carlota.

* * *

Down upon the slow-moving procession of daily life, the cathedral clock, rusty in its ancient mechanism, drops the announcement of quarter-hours. But the Oaxaqueños pay it little heed. They move more by the sun and the moon and their own internal regulator of the value and necessity of time.

Most of the sight-seeing that needs to be done in Oaxaca on foot or by car can well be accomplished in a day. But you can sit at a sidewalk table for hours on end, day after day, and varied sights will come of themselves into your range of vision, just as you observe a Mardi Gras parade in New Orleans from an iron-grilled gallery.

It was Charles Flandrau who pointed out the analogy of the Mexican plaza to an English garden party: "And one meets and speaks with just as many strangers as one does at an English garden party. But in the Mexican plaza or park each person feels he is both host and guest." Nowhere in Mexico does this seem more true than in the municipal heart of Oaxaca. You are continually meeting people. A Mexican army officer is introduced and joins you in a vermouth. When he goes a poet or a representative of Palmolive Soap takes his place, or you are invited to join a group of mining engineers on a spree.

But there is one disturbing element not found in an English garden party, or even in the Mexican towns of Taxco or Morelia or San Miguel de Allende. It is the clocklike interruption of sociable beggars. There are a half-dozen who make the rounds within an hour. One is a blind girl, who knows the territory so well that she saunters freely among the tables, with-

Continued on page 59



Water Color.

By Miguel Alemán Mochedo.

Pito Pérez

(Continued from the July Number)

I BENT my course for La Huacana, Pito Pérez said, 'taking a roundabout to avoid the hacienda of San Pedro Jarullo, the property of some fellow townsman of mine. I wished to avoid meeting them; for if they had seen me they would certainly have carried to my family the news of my presence in that neighborhood.

'Not being the citizen of a great metropolis, I have always preferred living in a small town rather than in a provincial capital, for this last is always a nursery of inanity and a seat of freaks and follies. The inhabitants of a provincial capital can be classified in this manner: three or four landowning families, the proprietors of great haciendas which they have inherited or acquired overnight through sharp or shady dealing, ten very illustrious but ruined houses, their cupboards stuffed with parchments testifying that one great-grandfather was a judge of the Audiencia, another a royalist colonel, another a brother-in-law of the Count of Cerro Gordo or a nephew of the Marquis of Sierra

By Rubén Romero

Madre. These set the tone in all the gatherings of "good society," bringing out for such occasions the earrings given them by the Empress Carlota, or the mantilla of point lace which Grandmother wore when she was the bridesmaid of Doña Lorenza Negrete Cortina de Sanchez de Tagle. They are haughty persons, ready to make themselves ridiculous everywhere by their presumption, as happened when they invited Maximilian to visit the capital of Michoacan. One of the most distinguished citizens of Morelia, eager to show himself a courtier, said to the Emperor, "How's little Carlota?" To which the Emperor replied with circumspection, "Her Majesty the Empress is well"; and he the professions, those who patronize clergy, and that declined the invitation offered him by persons so little acquainted with protocol.

anonymous mass of humble workmen who eat when they are lucky and whose daughters think themselves . . . After this breed of tinsel dolls come the families of persons in government employ, those belonging to

flattered when they are serenaded by rich young bloods I don't know by what precedent or for what reason; guess for yourself, you who are so good at guessing.

"In these cities poverty has a tragic face, and shameless rascals like myself cannot live there decently. The small towns, on the other hand, are to my taste, for in them a man may take the color of his natural surroundings. The fact is, I like living in small shabby towns. In them I am the leading personage; in them I am treated with kindness by humble folk who are honored with my friendship and amused by my talk. I have sat for long days at the table of a wealthy farmer who was enchanted with my lies and kept saying to me, over and over, like a child listening to a fairy-tale, 'And what then, Señor Perez? What happened then, Señor Pito?' till the water in my well was exhausted and I had to renounce a hospitality purchased with the coin of my scanty invention.

"In the little towns the rich man is a farmer and the poor man a farm-laborer, which comes to the same thing; the only exceptions are Don So-and-So, the shopkeeper, who robs them both, and Don What's-His-Name, who keeps the drugstore and cleans them all out; sometimes their stomachs, sometimes their livers, but their purses in any case. When, at nightfall, the laborer comes home from the fields, exhausted by the day's plowing and eager for a little leisurely conversation, he goes to the shop of his old friend Gomersindo. There, as if by chance, comes Pito Perez, to whom, in the hope that he may enliven the gathering, they offer a drink. I comment on the news in the daily paper; I repeat the good things I have heard said of each person present, taking care never to stumble upon any word which may be displeasing to the general liberality; and treated by this one and treated by that, I collect, in my belly all their good drinks, along with the bread and cheese offered me on the side by the owner of the shop, who, of course, gets his own slice from the universal bounty. Oh, the small town, that Utopia of the lazy, that Paradise of the babblers!"

"But stop rambling so much, Pito Perez, and tell me what you did when you came to La Huacana."

"Sat down on a bench in the square, under one of those tamarinds so full of flowers that they seem like a canopy of gold tissue freshly raised above the traveler's head. The bells were ringing for Mass and a few people were on their way soberly to the parish church. Thereupon, like any needy person, I thought of God. 'Let's find out,' I said to myself, 'how kind a Providence looks after the people of La Huacana; and let us, in passing, take a turn through the market to see whether the Lord may not place something eatable within reach of my mouth.'"

"After wandering the streets in vain I entered the church and sat down opposite a confessional in which a priest was listening to the sinful buzz-buzz of a devout old woman. When I looked closely at the swarthy, pockmarked face of the Lord's servant I recognized him at once: he was Father Pureco of Santa Clara, whom I had assisted many a time to say Mass. Unable to restrain myself, I went and stood so near the confessional that I could hear the trivial advice the father was giving the penitent: 'Love your spouse as you would the Holy Church; a married woman should be silent; don't argue with your husband, even though he is, as you say, stupider than you are. Now make your offering and go in peace, my daughter.'"

"He gave her absolution and, turning to where I stood, said, 'Repeat the Confiteor.'"

"I am Jesús Perez."

"That's not the Confiteor, and what's more, I don't even know you."

"Yes, you do, father. I'm Pito Perez of Santa Clara."

"You're Pito Perez?" exclaimed the priest with something very like joy in his voice.

"Pito himself, father, but dead of hunger."

"Go and wait for me in the sacristy and tell me what has happened to you."

"In my native place Father Pureco was thought: somewhat slow of understanding; and may God forgive me if, in saying this, I speak ill of one of His representatives; although, without doubt, the Holy Ghost knows very well the capacities of all His servants. When he came to the sacristy I told him a pathetic tale, describing how the poverty of my family had led me to leave Santa Clara in search of work; how earnestly I had sought means of aiding my sisters; and hunger gave to my voice a note so moving that, as a first act of Providence, Father Pureco offered me the shelter of his house; and putting on his long cloak, carried me there and regaled me with a jug of milk and some plantains cooked after the manner relished in the hot country.

"At lunch-time he questioned me concerning the lives and fortunes of all the citizens of our native town; and I satisfied his curiosity as well as I could, adding my own harvest of small details. In so doing I was nearly the destruction of my generous host.

"And Martin Pureco, what's he doing?"

"Nothing, father, for he has gone to a better life."

"What! He's dead?"

"Father Pureco was within a hairsbreadth of fainting away at the news, for the person alluded to was his brother, a circumstance of which I was not aware. I had to bring the dead man to life with all speed and by a flood of eloquence contrive to make my questioner forget the false obituary.

"In the days that followed, I assisted the priest in all the employments of the temple: I collected the alms without charging my due percentage; I changed the robes of the images; and, as there was no organist, I filled the precincts with the trills of my wonderful flute. The faithful were astonished at this unaccustomed music; but I observed from the choir that, when I played a dance, they cheered up and kept time with their heads.

"During High Mass, on the Sunday following my arrival, when the attendance of country folk was most imposing, Father Pureco climbed the pulpit to preach the sermon. He repeated first an Ave Maria, to invoke the inspiration of the Virgin, cleared his throat loudly, settled his false teeth firmly in place, and opened the flood-gates of his eloquence.

"On other occasions, from this holy pulpit, I have explained to you, my brethren, the theological virtues, but you have heard me with indifference, as a man may hear the rain fall without getting wet. The theological virtues are few enough for you to learn, but—Forgive me, Sovereign Substantiated Lord," said Father Pureco, turning to the high altar, "I have a congregation of block-heads who do not understand Christian doctrine.—Just once more I am going to explain to you what is Faith, what is Hope, what is Charity.

"What is Faith? Oh, be moved, you hearts of stone! Faith is a white dove which we carry hidden in our tender bosoms! But we must awaken it before it can lead us to the Gates of Glory, and to awaken it, we must first cast out of our hearts the hawk of Sin, because it we allow that hawk to stay there it will end by eating the innocent little dove.

"And Hope? Oh, is there anything more lovely than Hope? Only the most holy Virgin herself is more beautiful! And what is Hope? Pay close attention, and engrave my words on your hearts: Hope is the second theological virtue. How sweet it is to repeat with the Lord: I hope to walk in the straight path.

to make clean my conscience, and to know God! Even in material things, how grateful it is to have hope! For it is no sin, my brethren, to say, provided our thoughts are fixed on God: I hope to have a little house, and a wife, and the many children which are the blessings of the holy bond; I hope to win the lottery; I hope that on my birthday my faithful will buy me a new cassock and the watch which I so greatly need.

"And Charity? Why, the very word indicates its nature: it is the loving-kindness which finds expression in gifts. But what do you know of divine things, however much the Holy Ghost may inspire my words? I wish only to illuminate the dark night of your understanding with the unfailing light of truth, but—with Thy permission, Sovereign Substantiated Lord—you are a bunch of rascals. No, no; I cannot take back what I have said: not until you have proved that your Faith exists, that your Hope lives, and that your Charity manifests itself in deeds. Remember that my birthday is the twenty-fourth of August. Go in peace, in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen."

Father Pureco came down from the pulpit so possessed with the fire of inspiration that he did not notice how his alb had caught on a nail of the door until he heard the noise of tearing; whereupon, without asking the Sovereign Substantiated Lord's permission, he gave vent to a *Carajo!* as round and sonorous as a slap in the face.

"We directed our steps to the house, and at the dinner-hour, as if not wishing to open the subject, Father Pureco said to me, "How did my sermon strike you, Pito Perez?"

"Very well indeed, father; especially that lovely image about our tender bosoms; but it lacked an essential which is necessary for moving the faithful: I mean Latin, the one thing that will make pious listeners weep in church."

"You're right, Pito; but I don't remember the sayings of the Church Fathers any more."

"I can be useful to you in that, as in many other things, father," I said with the aim of winning him. "See here: I will select some Latin sentences; then you will learn them and use them in your sermons, without asking the Substantiated Lord's permission, in place of those dreadfully hard words you just used."

"I'll tell you how that is: I only talk to them like that on Sundays, because that is the day when the ranchmen come to Mass and they don't understand any other language."

"That's just where you're wrong, father. They don't listen to you because they think you are not learned. Doctors, when speaking to their patients, are careful to call diseases by their scientific names; because, if they used the common names, then the sick would doctor themselves with catnip tea and hot stones."

Father Pureco was convinced and I set myself to hunt for phrases and maxims in Latin. I found a dictionary of phrases in that language; but as I wished to make myself indispensable, I covered the book with a newspaper lest the priest should discover how I came by so much erudition; and on small slips of paper I copied out the sentences which, to my thinking, might well be used; bits of paper which Pureco then pulled out of his breviary when he was in the pulpit, like the trained birds that tell fortunes at country fairs. When he saw me reading on the sly, he imagined that I had got hold of some obscene novel and he reproved me sternly, although with a somewhat knowing smile on his lips.

Not very sure of what he was saying and fearful of offending God, Father Pureco continued to say,

"With Thy permission, Sovereign Substantiated Lord," before bringing out any of the Latin phrases with which I supplied him. "Brethren in Christ, your ingratitude toward the Divine Saviour grieves me aboyo. Come ye all to His feet, as the Gospels command you: *bonum vinum lacerat cor hominis*. I desire only your salvation, I beseech for you the mercy of the Supreme Judge. Before Him I earnestly desire to intercede, and to say: O Lord, pardon them. Behold them here before you, in penitence and repentant."

* * *

"You mixed up the papers, father, and called the faithful drunkards," I said to him when he came down from the pulpit.

"No matter, Pito. I've called them much worse things before and they never took offense."

I do not know whether it was through using Latin or whether it was merely a coincidence, but the fact is that the faithful began to show greater respect for their spiritual shepherd and he to grow conceited and to give himself airs, like any public functionary; to such an extent that he applied even to me the very Latin words I had taught him, and that with much greater dexterity than when he was in the pulpit. Before ordering me to do something he would say: "*Hoc volo, sic jubes, sit pro ratione voluntas*."

Such tyranny, shocking to my rebellious nature; the fact that I received no wages; and a longing to get drunk from time to time (for I had already acquired a taste for drink and the father never allowed me so much as to smell it); all this made me think of leaving that house to seek my fortune in another place. A sickness which fell upon me, an intermittent fever, confirmed my project of abandoning La Huacana. The fever, during the moments when it attacked me, shook my body as in a sieve; afterward when it had gone, I did not have strength to lift the bread to my mouth.

I resolved, therefore, to leave Father Pureco tangled in the meshes of his Latin; and from an image of the Virgin of Solitude, greatly venerated in the church, I removed two or three gold ornaments, wishing to preserve them in memory of so beautiful an image; but much against my will I had to sell them on my way. So exhausted was I, and so sad, that I did not even play my flute; and I strove continually to think how I might present myself at my home without fear of reprimands and punishments.

I was two days in going from La Huacana to Ario, and another two from that town to Santa Clara, passing the night in the hills, so weakened by fever and by fatigue that I fancied the stars were tall mortuary candles shivering round my dead body. I could have reached my native town when the sun was overhead; but I thought it prudent to wait till night-fall, to avoid being observed in the streets. "No doubt," I thought, "I shall have to appear before a family council; my sisters will reprimand me, my mother Herlinda will try to punish me; after that they will all cry; then, when the tempest is over, perhaps they will listen with interest to the story of my travels, and will end by killing a lamb to celebrate the return of the Prodigal Son."

Seated on a stone by the wayside I waited for the afternoon to pass; then, like a lame dog, I went slowly down to my house and knocked, with more fright than shame, at the door of the vestibule. One of my sisters opened and said "Come in" as naturally as if she had seen me go out only a few minutes before. No one showed the least surprise at my return; no one asked me where I had been or how long I thought of staying.

"It was I, rather, who said to Concha, noting her preoccupied air, 'You look sad, little sister.'"

"I'm worried because last night I dreamed I laid a great big egg—with a good deal of difficulty, too—and I'm afraid my bad dream may come true."

"Suddenly it struck me that Concha looked like a hen with spectacles; and that, in fact, everybody in our family looked like some animal: my mother Herlinda had the face of a little dog; Maria of a goat; Lola the face of a guinea pig; Joaquin of a simple-minded rabbit, and I, of a sly rat."

"The delirium of fever, no doubt! But what kind of fever did Concha have that made her afraid of laying eggs?"

Are you settled in your home town again?"

"Only for a short time. Wandering becomes a vice. I shall not give up my travels, even though they carry me no farther than to Opoopo. Just as the food in another man's house seems to have a better taste, so, to drunkards, the wine in other villages has a more exciting flavor."

When I first came home, I found that the drinkers of the town were accustomed to gather night after night in Solorzano's store.

A certain José Vasquez occupied the leading place. Though he was the secretary of the law court, I did not know him. He was a newcomer in the town; a wonder, so they said, at tipping a bottle. He left far in the rear all those who used to enjoy glory and fame for the same cause—don Juan, Don Pedro Sandoval, and Don Alipio Aguilera.

One afternoon, curious to meet the champion, I went to Solorzano's store to await him. Vasquez came, ordered a little refresher, and was served a big glass of aguardiente, which he drained at one draft as if it were soda water.

Hearing me called Pito Perez, he assumed that my nickname was an affectionate diminutive for Agapito, and, with great friendliness, to the amusement of everyone, he began to say "Don Pito" this and "Don Pito" that.

"Señor Don Pito, they tell me that you have seen half the world."

"As the Bible would put it, I know all except Sodom, Nineveh, Jerusalem, and Babylon. In this hemisphere I know Tlácaro, Ario, La Huacana, and other places—so many I don't remember their names. Villages that look like ranches; ranches that look like cities!"

Recalling that the owner of the store was a native of Patzcuaro and that he was listening to us attentively, I exclaimed with great pompousness:

"But the metropolis I like best is Patzcuaro. Where is there a city more poetically melancholy! Where is there such a lake—liquid mineral whose lode of silver fishes is inexhaustible! When is there a more beautiful panorama than that which unrolls from the peak of Calvary, embracing all of Michoacan. And if we strain our eyes a little, we can even see the towers of Guadalajara, unique in the world for the clarity of its air on the few days when it doesn't rain! Where is there a more miraculous virgin than the Virgin of Health, who grants whatever is asked of her!"

"Isn't that so, Señor Solorzano?" I asked the owner of the shop, whose mustaches were quivering with sheer emotion as he heard me praise his birthplace with such warmth.

I felt a diabolical plan ripening in my mind.

"Listen, Señor Vasquez let's ask the Virgin for a drink. If she is really so miraculous, she'll provide all that's necessary. I'm sure she will never miss

such a bagatelle as the one we'll ask for. Were she to refuse, it would give Patzcuaro a black eye."

I joined my hands devoutly and lifted my eyes as though praying. I had hit the mark, or rather, I had made a direct hit on Solorzano's religious sensibilities, for he hastened to set before each of us a glass of the purest Taneitaro, distilled illegally in the back of his respectable store.

The Virgin performed the miracle ten times in succession till at length Secretary Vasquez fell sound asleep upon a pile of boxes and I found my way home by pure luck.

I tried, on another occasion, to awaken the local pride of that mystical shopkeeper; but the Virgin failed to repeat the miracle, perhaps because I did not pray for it with the necessary faith.

At that time, when as yet bad luck had not unsteadied my hand, I wrote a beautiful round, clear script. On learning this, Vasquez, the secretary, invited me to be his amanuensis. I accepted, because I thought that since we were drinking companions we could easily get along together as fellow workers. What a mistake! Vasquez was one of those officials who take advantage of their inferiors in everything; one whom nobody can please; one who steals everybody's ideas. I spoke my mind naively when we were talking about the business of the court only to hear my opinions quoted as though they were his own. His preamble always was: "In my humble opinion..." To complete my study of fools in general, I had only to observe the judge and the secretary. Now, I know that the size of a man's job may change, but a dolt or a rascal remains the same, whether he is the mayor of a village or a minister of the Republic in the capital city.

In a government office you learn many things. At first it is hard to believe that public officials can be so vain, or that those who surround them can be so cringing and so obsequious.

By the way, I'll tell a simple anecdote: One of the presidents of our Republic—a good democrat—had a childhood friend, a man who never asked him for anything. But it happened that the friend had to go to the capital to be treated, upon the advice of his village doctor, and, full of innocent illusions, he said to himself: "This is my chance to call on the President, and just in passing I'll ask him to help some of our old friends. I don't want anything for myself, thank God; but I know he is generous and will help those who need it."

Upon arriving in the capital, the friend began to pay calls at the Palace, where he learned a great deal about the torture of the anterooms during those times his doctor left him free.

As he returned day after day and sat waiting hour after hour, there passed before his curious rustic eyes all the ministers, all the highest dignitaries of the Republic. With one glance they measured the poor little mortals who looked like fungi born to die in the halflight of the anterooms; and on they went, their portfolios under their arms. Barely greeting one another between their teeth, they opened the door to the President's office and were lost in mystery. After several hours the officials reappeared, and with the same air of grand viziers they crossed the anterooms again, surrounded by their clients and fawned upon by their friends.

After several days the President learned that his childhood friend—that sad and humble boy whom he had not seen for so many years—was asking for an audience with him. "Send my friend in," he ordered the adjutant of the guard. And his friend went in, pleased and deeply impressed to be meeting the President in the company of those proud and arro-

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Woodcut.

By Eduardo Ramírez.

Man versus the Land

By Enrique Beltrán

FOR A HUNDRED CENTURIES man has been gleaning his food from the earth in the corner of America we now call Mexico. This has been confirmed by recent archeological finds—like the sensational discovery of "Tepexpan Man" only a few miles from the capital—which have added hundreds of years to estimates of man's antiquity in Mexico. Because the earth was not always generous and man did not know how to make it produce without destroying it, the process of living off the land has been one long, continuous struggle.

We are always talking about our turbulent, strife-torn history. We speak of the conflicts that flared up between one and another of the pre-Hispanic peoples, of the Aztecs' heroic stand against Cortés, of the bloody battles since independence for a better life, of resistance on two occasions to foreign invaders. But we are apt to forget that others less spectacular but much graver struggle that still goes on all over the country. Yet it involves not only our welfare—already rendered precarious in some regions—but our very survival. Every day our environment becomes more hostile because of irrational human action, and there are unmistakable signs that unless we take drastic steps, the environment will soon refuse to support our over-increasing population.

Ours is an extremely mountainous country. The foreigner approaching Mexico City, whether from the United States, Guatemala, by way of the Gulf port of Veracruz, or the Pacific resort of Acapulco, travels over steep, twisting highways. Tourists wax enthusiastic over the marvelous views, like the spot known as "Thousand Peaks," along the road from Mexico City to Guadalajara. But the very beauty of the landscape reveals one of Mexico's greatest problems: the dearth of flat agricultural land.

Barely a third of the national territory is considered flat enough for cultivation with certain simple protective measures. And this third lies chiefly in the Yucatán Peninsula, where the soil is too thin for indiscriminate cultivation, and on the semi-arid Central Plateau.

Because of the jagged terrain, a great many of the crops are sown on hill and mountainside, sometimes at a really incredible angle. Often fields are so steep that the farmer must tie a rope around his waist, fastening the other end to a rock or tree on the peak to keep from falling into the valley. Once the slope is denuded of its natural protective covering of trees, thickets, or grass, the soil is exposed to all the agents of erosion. To make matters worse, for the sake of convenience the rows are often plowed

in line with the slope—"hanging," as the farmers graphically describe it.

So the rains that beat upon the mountain no longer meet the thousand plant barriers that once blocked their course and made the water filter slowly into the soil, saturating it until the excess reappeared as springs to feed permanent, crystal-clear rivers and brooks. Under the new man-made conditions, the wild and savage water rushes impetuously down the slopes, barely dampening the top layer of soil. Gathering torrential speed, it dashes in uncontrollable waterfalls toward lower levels, finally losing itself in the sea without benefiting man.

Such a situation is particularly harmful to a country like Mexico, where the rainfall in much of the territory is deficient or sporadic. The Lower California Peninsula, all of the northern zone, and the plateau average together an annual rainfall of only some thirty inches, and nearly half the territory totals less than fifteen.

Even that slight precipitation often comes in violent downpours during a short rainy season, followed by a long drought in which any vegetable life is impossible and cattle die of thirst. Estimates show that scarcely 13 per cent of the nation's surface has adequate moisture throughout the year, while around 50 per cent never has enough.

In the United States, the first European colonists found a practically virgin land, with a small population, mainly nomadic and therefore not likely to do much damage to the soil. Squandering of natural resources in that country has taken place for less than four hundred years. Nevertheless, the waste has been fabulous.

In Mexico the conquistadors landed on territory inhabited by a population that has been estimated at over nine million. Some of the ancient peoples—the Toltecs, Aztecs, Mayas, and Zapotecs, among others—had reached a high level of civilization and built majestic cities whose ruins still fill us with wonder. Those at Monte Albán, for example, cover no less than fifteen square miles.

Naturally, these communities accommodated a great many people, who took from nature the raw materials for their huge buildings. Think of the amount of firewood needed for calcining rock to make lime for their pyramids and palaces. Imagine the quantity of lumber that must have gone into scaffolding, supports, and so on during construction.

To feed the people, vast areas were cultivated under the destructive milpa system, which unfortunately still prevails in many parts of Mexico. Before sowing corn, the basic item in their diet, the Indians cleared the land by cutting down the trees and burning the weeds. Yields were generally good in the beginning, but soon fell off because of soil exhaustion and erosion on the slopes. The Indians would then abandon this plot to start the same ruinous cycle elsewhere. Little by little, they converted areas once covered with lush vegetation into barren wastes. The mysterious disappearance of the once brilliant and powerful Maya civilization has been explained by many authors in terms of this progressive soil exhaustion, which finally made the land totally incapable of sustaining the thickly populated cities.

Undoubtedly, the valleys of Oaxaca—where Monte Albán and Mitla are found—and Teotihuacán—site of the sacred city of the Toltecs—were once forest-covered. But our Indian ancestors had largely destroyed the forests by the time the bearded white men, whose coming was prophesied by Quetzalcoatl, arrived from beyond the sea. Instead of the virgin land that awaited the Mayflower travelers, the Europeans who came to Anáhuac found land that had been used and abused for centuries.

What was the effect of the Spaniards' coming on the conservation picture? It is no exaggeration to call it disastrous. The iron axes they brought with them were put to work felling vast numbers of trees to furnish building materials for homes and ships, and bridges for the new royal roads—which in turn made wheeled carts and draft animals necessary. Under the lure of gold, a basic Conquest motive, the Spaniards bored into our mountains, using fantastic quantities of wood both for the support of mine shafts tunnels and for smelting and refining the metals. To be sure, the great Mexican miner Bartolomé de Medina's discovery of the so-called "patio process" somewhat alleviated the pressure on the forests from mining. But to give an idea of the magnitude of timber depoliation, it is enough to mention one of the charges leveled at Cortés when he was accused of living the ostentatious life of a king: that he ordered cut down no less than six thousand cedars in the Texcoco Mountains for the beams of his palace. It is not surprising that this region is now reduced to semi-desert, or that the trees so lavishly appropriated by the conqueror have almost disappeared.

The Spaniards brought over all sorts of livestock unknown in America, putting them to graze on meadows and hillsides without making any previous estimate of the pastures' carrying capacity. Where the grass was good, cows, horses, and burros grazed. Lambs were put on poorer pasture, and land too bare for them was turned over to the goats. Because they denude land so completely, goats are responsible for the misery in many areas around the Mediterranean, besides being a serious problem in several Mexican states, particularly Coahuila and Nuevo León. Thus over-grazing became still another destructive force.

During colonization, the Indians lived a hazardous and miserable existence, often without enough to eat. Enslaved by the Spaniards and reduced to a lean diet of wholly insufficient quantities of corn and beans, they sought the missing animal proteins in whatever creatures they could capture. Wild animals of every type—from succulent deer and delicious wild turkey to humble frogs and the grotesque iguana lizards—were avidly hunted to supplement this meager fare. Add to this the fact that the conquerors introduced the sport of hunting with firearms, and it is easy to see how Mexico's game stocks were quickly depleted. In many areas wild animals became almost extinct. Explosives were also used in fishing, practically wiping out the fish in many of our lakes and streams.

The continuous political and social upheavals of the nineteenth century, always ending in armed battle, led to additional destruction. By the second half of the century, when Mexico seemed to be finding its way after the decisive triumph of the Republic, its natural resources were excessively depleted. The country's population, calculated at around six million at the beginning of the independence movement in 1810, had climbed to almost ten million when Porfirio Díaz's long regime started in 1880. And the pressure on the land grew apace. The Díaz regime coincided with world expansion of capitalism and imperialist exploitation of underdeveloped countries. Our nation did not escape rapacious attack by foreign firms, which extracted our natural resources without the slightest regard for conservation.

The upshot of this history of pillaging is a frightening threat to our national survival. Fortunately, the governments following the 1910 Revolution have been doing something about it.

Agricultural services have been greatly expanded, and the growing National School of Agriculture has modernized its teaching methods in order to train professionals to handle the situation. For a radical

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Patterns of an Old City

THE TWINS

By Howard S. Phillips

WHEN Doña Lucha, perusing the morning paper, read the name GUSTAVO VALLARINO y ZUBIRAN printed in bold type under a little cross inside a heavy black frame, she uttered a stifled outcry. Her heart missed a beat and her hands began to tremble violently. She put the paper aside and with a blurred vision stared across the room. Then, with great effort, she picked it up again and read the text underneath the name, worded in the usual way, announcing: "Died at 16.30 hours in the fold of our Mother the Holy Apostolic Roman Catholic Church, comforted by all spiritual aid and Papal Benediction. His inconsolable sons, daughters, sons-in-law, grandchildren, nephews and other relatives inform you with profoundest sadness and beg of you to lift your prayers to Our Lord for the eternal rest of his soul. Mexico, D. F. August 28, 1952."

She slumped limply in the corner of the sofa, a sharp physical pain gripping her heart, wiping with trembling hands the tears that streamed down her withered cheeks. She had not wept like this, nor sensed this kind of devastating grief in years. She was at once crushed and bewildered by it, for beyond this grief there was a dim comprehension that it was not that of bereavement but of a final and irremediable frustration, that it defined the loss of an obsessive hope, of a sustaining purpose.

And so he is dead, she thought. He is dead, and now I will never be able to do anything about it. I have waited too long. He eluded me after all these years of waiting. I have lacked courage and decision. Let all these years go by, and now it is too late. Now, there is nothing I can do about it.

The ancient hate, the supreme necessity of vengeance, which lent her drab existence the element of hope and purpose, smouldering in her being like a tiny vitalizing flame, were now to no avail, and her future suddenly seemed to be devoid of object and cast into emptiness. I have waited too long, she repeatedly said to herself. I have waited too long.

Her own life now, with the death of this man, seemed to have come to its end, and in her bitter weeping she was actually bewailing this death.

* * *

In the sedate middleclass neighborhood of the Colonia Santa Maria—in the days when most people still owned the houses they lived in, when family names still defined a certain social position and courtships were carried on through the redoubtable bars of iron-grilled windows—the Pedraza twins were renowned for their unusual beauty. Their milky complexion, their reddish-auburn hair and green eyes and their lithe and perfectly proportioned bodies made them clearly outstanding among the young women of the neighborhood and widely sought by the young men.

Bafflingly resembling each other, unlike most twins, however, who fully duplicate each other otherwise, they were completely different in character. While Lucha was quiet, reflective, thoroughly sensible and unspoiled by her beauty, Cucca was impulsive, vain, unpredictable, mystical and flighty. Guided by constantly shifting emotions, she never knew her mind. And yet, despite this difference, like most twins, they were bound by an innate unity, by a congenital force of cohesion which rendered the inner life of each inseparable from that of the other. Withal, it was a pre-

carious and pathetic attachment, implying a perpetual conflict between them, because Cucca always rebelliously sought to free herself of it, while Lucha preserved for her sister an obsessive devotion. And even though beauty is commonly regarded as the road to happiness, due perhaps to the fact that theirs was so highly exceptional it filled their life with discontent, with turmoil and strife. Men were dazzled by it; they were drawn to it helplessly; they were intoxicated by it and even led to folly, yet presently they were frightened by it and even repelled.

Each neighborhood has its staple topics for gossip, and over a period of years the Pedraza twins served almost inexhaustibly as one of such. The subject provided infinite novelty. Consisting of a dramatically unwinding process, it preserved its freshness and aroused the curiosity even of the most life-hardened and blasé. After a time it assumed the nature of a somewhat lurid saga, of a story told in a sequence of episodes, which usually began with such intriguing interrogation as: "...And have you heard the latest about.....?"

Even today, almost fifty years later, some of Doña Lucha's surviving contemporaries in the vastly altered neighborhood might be able to tell you the story, enlivened by minute details, for Doña Lucha, living alone in the old house and something of a recluse, still bears the distinction of a highly unusual past. She can still be referred to with such preface remark as: "You would never suspect that this old woman once, oh many years ago, was....." And the story you might hear will probably bear the following substance:

The two girls were strangely alike and unlike, and yet they were so much part of each other that the success or failure, the happiness or grief of one implied the same condition in the other. Lucha, who was undoubtedly the most virtuous of the two, would have most likely achieved a normal and happy existence. But her life was irreparably ruined by the ruin her sister brought onto herself. It seemed as if it were predestined and inevitable.

Though physically they were both equally attractive, it was Cucca's restless and disturbing personality that exerted the greater appeal. Men were drawn to her irresistibly. They were helpless playthings in her hands: pawns of her whimsical will. Relishing her sense of power, she craved their love, withholding or dispersing her own, enjoying the sight of their suffering, pursuing the game of rivalry and deceit, the dangerous game of heartbreak; while her sister, cautious and reserved to masculine attentions, striving to protect her, to conceal the truth from their parents, in her despair even striving to shield her in her wrongdoing, lived in continuous dread that the other's perilous game would some day end in disaster.

By all accepted standards, the Pedrazas, however, were a respectable family and they lived in a respectable neighborhood; hence, of course, despite the antecedent foreboding gossip and notoriety, it was a source of common shock and indignation when the news leaked out that Cucca was pregnant. In the surrounding streets it was the subject of cautious whispered talk, of sanctimonious lamentations or salacious conjecture; inside the house it signified an overwhelming tragedy and imminent ruin. But even in their respectable midst errant daughters are not likely to be driven out on the street, and the family, accept-

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Story of the Mexico-Oaxaca Railway

By Stewart Morton

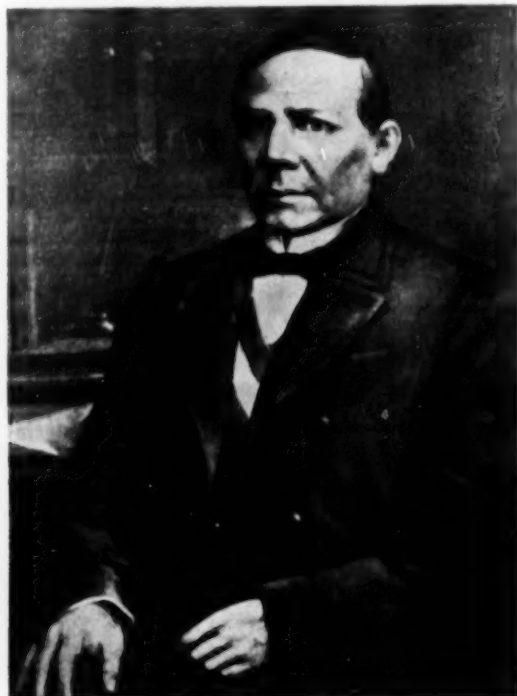
VIEWING the story of railway construction in Mexico, we often find the mistaken belief that the first attempts to communicate Oaxaca with the rest of the Republic were not made until after the construction of the major routes that extend from the Northern border to the City of Mexico—the Mexico-Nuevo Laredo and the Mexico-Ciudad Juárez—was begun. That is to say, it is commonly thought that government leaders did not turn their attention southward and had not conceived the need of freeing it of isolation until after the center and the North of the country were about to be linked by rail.

The truth is that even before the major lines of Nuevo Laredo and Ciudad Juárez were completed, and even before the concessions for their construction had been granted in September of 1880, there was a project for a railway to Oaxaca. On the 28th of May, 1875, the government of President Sebastián Lerdo de Tejada authorized a private concessionaire, José Esperón, to construct a line, under the name of Meridional Mexican Railway, which would connect the port of Veracruz with the City of Mexico, and the latter with Oaxaca. The project, however, did not evolve from a simple good intention, and it was not until March 22nd of 1878, during the first administration term of President Porfirio Díaz, that a contract was signed with Pablo Pantoja, representative of the Oaxaca state government, for the building of a line that would part from a point near Tehuacán or Huajuapam de León, at the state limits of Puebla and Oaxaca, and termi-

nate, via the City of Oaxaca, at Puerto Angel, and would be subject to extension northward to a station of the Mexican Railway Mexico-Veracruz).

Lacking, however, economic or technical means, neither the government of Oaxaca or its representative José Esperón were able to initiate the work. But Oaxaca urgently need a rail outlet for its vast material resources in mining and agriculture. Hence, undismayed by the failures of 1875 and 1878, President Díaz extended a new authorization to the State of Oaxaca, represented this time by Juan Fenocho, to proceed with the work. The new project did not follow the previously specified route, its line parting from Antón Lizardo and terminating at Huatuleo, or Puerto Angel, passing through Quiotepec and Oaxaca City and joining the National Railway of Tehuantepec and that of Tehuacán at Esperanza. This contract was signed on the 25th of August, 1880.

Obviously convinced that the limited resources of the Oaxaca government would hardly suffice to meet the costs of this important undertaking, President Díaz included in the contract a clause whereby the above government could transfer the concession to a company or companies that might be formed in Mexico or abroad in order to carry out the job. Thus, in keeping with this clause, upon receiving this concession the government of Oaxaca entrusted an illustrious native of this state and Mexico's Ambassador in Washington, Don Matías Romero, with the task of promoting in the



Don Benito Juárez, President of Mexico, who envisioned the construction of a railway that would connect Mexico City with Oaxaca.



President Porfirio Díaz, under whose initiative the Mexico-Oaxaca Railway was constructed.



Reconstruction of the railway through the Tomellin Canyon.

United States a company that would materialize the project with American capital.

Don Matías Romero, who had served as Mexican Ambassador in Washington for President Juárez during the Intervention and Empire and had ample relations with high government officials and financiers in the United States, accepted his assignment with enthusiasm, and was soon able to interest a group of capitalists, headed by the ex-President of the United States, General Ulysses S. Grant. This company, headed by General Grant, and titled The Mexican Southern Railroad Company, was incorporated in the State of New York on the 16th of January, 1881, with the following list of shareholders: Ulysses S. Grant, Edwin D. Morgan, Matías Romero, Porfirio Díaz, Francisco Meixueiro, Miguel Castro, Ignacio Pombo, Fidencio Hernández, Francisco Landero y Cos, Ignacio Mariscal, José María Mata, Sidney Dillon, Russel Sage, Jesse Seligman, Frederick L. Ames, Frank Work, Jay Gould, Henry C. Marquand, A. L. Hopkins, U. S. Grant, Jr., Collins P. Huntington, James H. Work, J. B. Houston, Solon Humphreys, Stephen B. Musgrave, John B. Frisbie, Edward D. Adams, Thomas Nickerson, Thomas A. Scott and G. M. Dodge.

On the 26th of May, 1881, the government of President Manuel González modified the concession, to the effect that the projected route, instead of connecting Antón Lizardi with Puerto Angel or Huatulco would extend from Mexico City to Puebla, to Oaxaca, to Antón Lizardo, and the Guatemalan border, touching other parts of Oaxaca and Chiapas.

At the very outset the new company was beset by multiple problems. On the one hand the financial promotion was being retarded by adverse opinion advanced by many newspapers in the United States; on the other, the delay in financial promotion retarded the beginning of actual building operations.

In order to relieve some of the strain, on the 2nd of December, 1882 the Mexican government modified some of the clauses in the concession, thus making it more favorable to the company. Nevertheless, as result of serious financial failures in New York, in March of 1884 the company was forced to declare itself in bankruptcy, and in consequence, on the 28th of May, 1885, the Mexican government annulled the concession.

The task had to be commenced once again from the beginning. And the government of General Díaz—newly in power—granted a new concession to General Luis Mier y Terán, whose efforts, unfortunately likewise met with failure.

The work of actual construction, after a new survey had been made, did not begin until the 9th of September, 1899, under a contract with a new company, named *Compañía Limitada del Ferrocarril Mexicano del Sur*, that had been organized in London by a firm of contractors, Read, Campbell & Co., which at last, and after coping with many difficulties, constructed the route. However, the original ambitious project of a route from Mexico City to Oaxaca and the Guatemalan border, was reduced to a narrow-gauge route between the cities of Puebla and Oaxaca via Tehuacán and Quíotepec.

Extending southeast from the city of Puebla, the railway traverses a length of largely level territory as far as Tehuacán. From Tehuacán to the border of Oaxaca, the terrain is less even; while as the line advances farther into the territory of Oaxaca and approaches the foothills of the cordillera of the Sierra Madre del Sur, which jointly with its secondary chains of mountains form many rugged ascents and descents, it climbs to a height of 559 meters above sea-level, skirting peaks that reach a height of 1,927 meters, wherefrom numerous rapid streams flow into the canyons.

Due to the nature of this terrain, the section of the route between Puebla and Tehuacán was the least difficult to build. Between Tehuacán and Tecomavaca the terrain descends abruptly, and the route continues in zigzags as it nears the Sierra Madre, traversing them by way of the canyons formed by the rivers Salado, Grande de Quíotepec, Tomellín and San Antonio. This was undoubtedly the most difficult section to construct, for it entailed cuts through masses of solid rock and the perforation of various tunnels, whereof some are 300 meters in length. From Tecomavaca to the highest point along this railway, before it begins to descend to Oaxaca, it climbs to a height of 1,268 meters within an approximate distance a hundred kilometers.

The weight of the English-made rail originally employed in the construction of this route was that of fifty pounds to the yard, and over a great proportion of it it rested on steel crossies. The route included three major bridges—one over the Salado river and two over Quíotepec river—constructed of steel made in England.

The first stations along this route were those at Puebla, Tehuacán and Tecomavaca, with that at Puebla being the most important. Prior to the inauguration of this railroad over its entire length, the section between Puebla and Tecomavaca was placed in service, with English locomotives of 39 tons for passenger trains, and those of 44 tons for freight. The passenger coaches, of most modern type, were made of African oak and teakwood.

INAUGURATION OF THE ROUTE

The railway was completed all the way to Oaxaca in the first days of November, 1892, and was officially inaugurated on the 13th of that month by General Porfirio Díaz, President of the Republic. The inauguration was carried out with great solemnity in the presence of high government officials, members of the diplomatic corps, and other distinguished guests. President Díaz, accompanied by members of his Cabinet, and Staff, made the journey from Mexico City aboard a special train and was enthusiastically acclaimed by the populace along the entire route. At a banquet offered by the civil and military authorities of Oaxaca in the salons of the Government Palace, the President delivered the inaugural speech, wherein he stressed the great importance of the new railway as a factor of Oaxaca's economic development, especially that of the exploitation of its important mineral resources.

The total cost of the line amounted to 31,308,601.71 pesos. During the first year of its operation its gross income from freight and passenger traffic was that of 400,095.76 pesos. Reflecting the economic progress of Oaxaca, largely resulting from the operation of this railroad, its gross income progressively increased each year, representing in 1903, or ten years later, a total of 934,834.32 pesos. The profits grew steadily, amounting to 31,980.00 pesos in 1895, and 310,827.00 pesos in 1900. In 1908, the last year when the British-owned company rendered its annual report, the profit had reached 381,496.54 pesos.

The situation, nevertheless, was hardly as favorable as the above figures might indicate, due to the fact that since the company was capitalized in pounds it had to pay interests and other obligations in this money, whose exchange value in relation with the Mexican peso rose steadily owing to the decline in the price of Mexican silver. Despite an officially authorized 15% increase in the freight and passenger rates in July of 1903, the profits earned by the railway were wiped out through the unfavorable rate of monetary exchange.

As result of these economic difficulties, the owners of this railway decided to lease it to the Inter-oceanic Railway, with whose route it joined at Puebla. But even this move did not save it from continued losses.

MEXICAN SOUTHERN RAILWAY AND THE NATIONAL RAILWAYS OF MEXICO

In the year 1909, upon the definite organization of the National Railways of Mexico through the fusion of the Central and National lines, the Southern Mexican Railway passed to the control of the new company, and has been operated by it ever since. This fusion was the culmination of various financial deals carried out by the Mexican government with foreign owners in the aim of averting bankruptcies and maintaining the railways in operation. The control of the properties obtained by the government did not, however, include their administration.

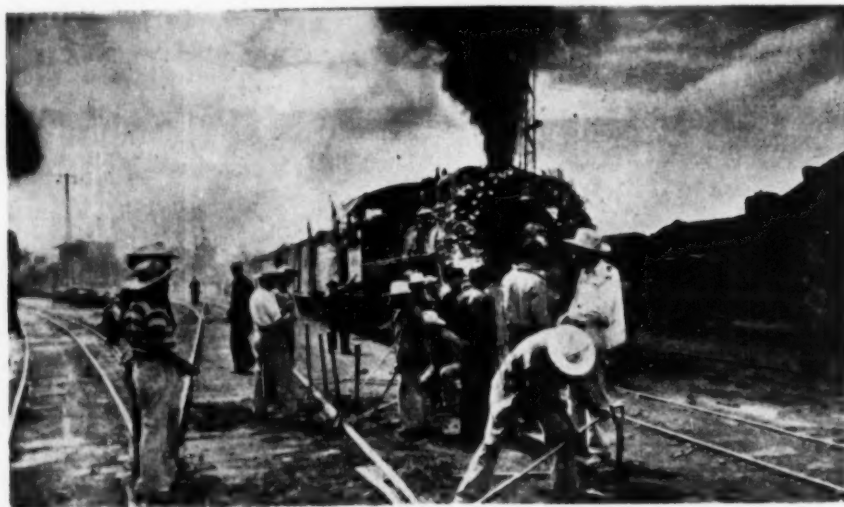
As regards the Southern Mexican Railway, its dependence on the government was somewhat relative, for it was based on a lease to one of the other companies, or the Inter-oceanic Railway, the majority of whose stock was controlled by the government. The new control preserved this railway in operation; but it did not solve its economic problems. For added to the nominal operational capacity of this narrow-gauge line, the progressive deterioration of its equipment, without any kind of renewal, finally reduced it to a state of utter decay.

In 1946, when the line was acquired by the Mexican government, its rolling stock consisted of thirteen locomotives, from fifty to fifty-eight years old, of five passenger and thirty-seven freight cars. With such old and worn equipment and an equally deteriorated trackage, the income of this railway did not suffice for its upkeep, piling up a deficit growing in size from year to year.

THE NEW STANDARD-GAUGE ROUTE

The widening of the old narrow-gauge routes which formed part of the National Railways system has been one of the essential objects in the program of railway rehabilitation realized during the past six years by its present administration. The conversion of the Mexico-Puebla-Oaxaca route from a narrow to a standard gauge was necessary for the same economic and technical reasons which required the widening of the Inter-oceanic Railway (Mexico-Veracruz) and of the Mexico-Veracruz and of the Mexico-Acambaro line. It made

Final journey of a narrow-gauge train.





One of the bridges (at San Pedrito) that had been rebuilt along the route.

possible a more rapid and efficient, a more voluminous and less costly operation of freight which is transported through this region, and which will further grow in volume with its economic expansion; it rendered this route uniform with the rest of the National system, and thus made it more fluid; and it will, moreover, greatly stimulate tourism from the interior and abroad to the States of Puebla and Oaxaca.

The standard-gauge route offers many other advantages over the narrow, though undoubtedly the most important of these is that it permits the movement of much heavier rolling stock and of much greater speed and capacity at an operational cost which is no greater than that of the narrow-gauge routes. The slowness and deficiency of operation on the narrow-gauge Mexico-Oaxaca route was further accentuated by its worn trackage that had been in use without replacement during a period of from sixty to seventy years, or since the line was constructed. This material, moreover, was of very light weight. Between Metepec and Puebla the rail was that of 56 pounds; between Puebla and Oaxaca, of 50 pounds; over the branch to Amozoc, of 56 pounds; over that from Tehuacán to Esperanza, of 50 pounds, of that from Oaxaca to Tlaxolula, of 40 and 50 pounds, and on that of Oaxaca to Taviche of 40, 50 and 60 pounds. It was but logical that with such light and worn trackage the traffic over its trunk line and branches was conducted under extremely precarious conditions.

For this reason the National Railways of Mexico initiated the conversion of this route immediately after it concluded that of the Interoceanic and Mexico-Acámbaro routes.

A WORK OF GIGANTIC PROPORTIONS

Technically, the widening of the Mexico-Oaxaca route turned out to be a very difficult job, for the reason that it presented problems that had not been confronted on the other rehabilitated routes, and that it was necessary, moreover, to carry out the work without interrupting for a single day the movement of trains between Mexico City and Oaxaca. One of the greatest obstacles that had to be overcome was the widening of the cuts through mountains of solid rock along sections 79 kilometers in length. The widening of tunnels was another highly complicated task. Two of those—that of Tepuente, between Mexico City and Puebla, 480 meters in length, and the Number 7 of the Tomellin Ganyon, 30 meters in length—were converted

into open cuts. In realizing this work, the pronounced curvature in some of the tunnels was duly reduced. In order that the bridges and trestles—1,092 in total—may support the weight of heavier trains, it was necessary to reinforce their structure along the trunk line and its branches and to construct 19 new ones.

After a complete rebuilding of the roadbed, for which 1,045,520 cubic of ballast were employed, new cross-ties, to the total of 741,317, were placed over the route. A total of 67,351 tons of heavy rail was employed to substitute the old light weight narrow-gauge rail, of which 15,033 tons is that of 112 pound weight, of French manufacture. The rest—52,318 tons—and that of 70, 80 and 85 pounds, was obtained through careful selection from the Mexico-Nuevo Laredo, San Luis Potosí-Tampico and Tampico-Monterrey routes, after they had been rehabilitated throughout with 112 pound rail.

The new 112 pound rail of French manufacture was placed along the steeper and more sinuous sections of the route between kilometers 200 and 300, where it is subjected to greatest strain.

Since the Oaxaca route has been always seriously affected by river floods, to the extent that on one occasion traffic on it had to be suspended during six months (from September of 1944 to February of 1945), in widening it the administration of National Railways built diverse works of protection, mainly in the Canyon of Tomellin, where the unruly Dulce river constantly menaces the line. Fourteen concrete embankments were built at this point to detain and divert the currents of the river. Eighteen additional embankments are being built at other points with the same purpose.

NEW SHOPS

The railway shops at Puebla, Tomellin and Oaxaca that were insufficient and inadequate for the services of the old line, were obviously unsuitable for the conservation and repairs of the new standard-gauge route. It was therefore necessary to build entirely new shops in these four cities, of first-quality materials and technically planned to meet the requirements of a growing traffic.

The old installations for water and fuel service, unsuitable because of their reduced capacity, were totally replaced with new equipment. Twenty-two water tanks, over metal supports, with a capacity of 220 cubic meters, were built along the route.

YARDS AND SIDINGS

In order that the wide-gauge trains may enter and leave the stations with greater facility, and to carry out necessary manoeuvres, 91 kilometers of trackage in totally new yards and sidings had to be constructed. One of the initial problems that had to be solved was that of train departure from Mexico City, which formerly was from the old narrow-gauge San Lázaro Station, that will soon be dismantled. The problem was solved in the following manner: Departing from the Buenavista Station, the trains proceed over its main line as far as kilometer 12; thence a distance of 13 kilometers over the Risco line, constructed especially for this purpose, until it joins the line of the Mexican Railway, upon which they run as far as Teotihuacán at kilometer 33, and from there on over a new link of two kilometers, likewise built for this purpose, to pass at kilometer 59 to the Inter-oceanic line, wherefrom they continue directly to Puebla and Oaxaca.

Eight kilometers of new trackage were built at Puebla, so as to expedite the loading and unloading operations of freight trains running between Mexico City and Oaxaca, and to facilitate repair and conservation service at the new Freight and Passenger Terminal which is being constructed in that city. Pending the conclusion of this building, the passenger trains are provisionally utilizing the Mexican Railway station. The new Terminal at Puebla, to be completed soon, will greatly help to elevate service standards along this route. Representing a cost of 6,412,740.88 pesos, in its amplitude, technical planning and modernity of equipment it is one of the finest constructed by the present administration.

Since the rehabilitation project would have been incomplete without replacing the various old and in-serviceable structures with new ones, the following were constructed along the route: a building for the offices of the station chief at Tehuacán; freight and

express warehouses at Tepeaca and Tecamachalco; stations at Telixtlahuaca and Quiotepec, and a first-aid station at Oaxaca City. The freight warehouses at Tehuacán and Oaxaca were rebuilt to meet present requirements.

. . .

The three thousand workmen who were employed in this important task received from the administration the fullest measure of care and protection. During the work inside the Tomellín Canyon, whose extremely hot and insalubrious climate is conducive to malarial and intestinal ailments, their health was safeguarded by transporting drinking water from Oaxaca, and by other preventive means. Thus, in a region which suffers a high mortality rate due to such ailments, not a single workman died in the course of the construction.

In great majority these laborers were natives of the region, and the unsparing effort they lent to the enormous undertaking, which could not have been supplanted by machines, played a decisive role in its materialization. Their boundless zeal and their innate inventiveness conquered many obstacles that could have not been overcome with merely technical means. In this splendid zeal they revealed a reborn spirit of industrious venturesomeness which enabled their ancestors to erect the monumental temples and palaces of Mitla and Monte Albán and the jewels of Colonial architecture which comprise the artistic heritage of Oaxaca.

The termination of the new Mexico City-Oaxaca route defines a signal achievement in the gigantic task of railway rehabilitation achieved by the National Railways of Mexico under the brilliant administration of Lic. Manuel R. Palacios, its General Manager, in keeping with the comprehensive plan traced by President Miguel Alemán.

The first standard-gauge train en route to Oaxaca.



Baroque in Mexican Architecture

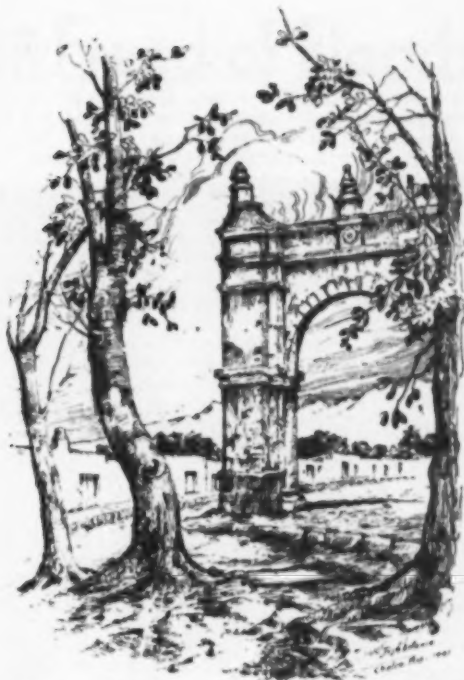
By Trent Elwood Sanford

WHEN THE influence of Philip II of Spain came to an end, and the artistic dictatorship of Herrera ceased with his death a year before that of his lord and master, a reaction set in, and the imaginative Spaniards, permitted once more to give vent to their creative artistic abilities, took up with enthusiasm the new fashion of the Baroque, and before long were to lead with their own interpretations of the new style. Nowhere were these opportunities embraced with greater fervor than in Mexico, which, by that time, had been able to cease building fortress churches and could afford to indulge in greater richness of architectural expression.

The Herreran influence, with that of the Gracelina Renaissance which led up to it, though profoundly affecting the three largest cathedrals in Mexico, and the early phase especially evident in the interior of the Cathedrals of Guadalajara, was not as extensive in that country as it was at home. Even the great Cathedral of Mexico City was overtaken by the Baroque; and cities of less importance than Mexico, Puebla, and Guadalajara quickly accepted that style without having been subjected unduly to the Classic Interlude. Royal attention had been concentrated on the three most important and most Spanish cities of New Spain; and with the building of the three largest cathedrals of the country in those cities, the Classic Interlude had spent itself. In other cities and in other churches in those three largest cities, and in secular buildings too, the new fashion of the Baroque was wholeheartedly accepted. Its twisted and decorated columns, its broken pediments, its heavy and irregular mouldings, and its abundance of sculptures in decorated niches are to be found all over the country.

As the Baroque overtook the Classic of the High Renaissance, or Graeco-Roman as it is sometimes called, so did the later phase of the Baroque, the Churrigueresque or Ultra-Baroque overtake the first somewhat more conventional phase. This is especially noticeable in interiors. Many churches which followed the Baroque fashion on the exterior were not entirely completed before the Churrigueresque was the caprice of the day, and in their interior furnishings they gave way completely to the lavish irregularities of the later offshoot; while in public buildings and in palaces, many examples of both styles are found, and sometimes combinations of the styles.

The national capital unquestionably has a greater number of monuments of the ornate Baroque period than any other city in Mexico; in fact, it was the Baroque of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that was the making of that city architecturally. The



Pen Drawing.

By Jose A. Rodriguez.

Baroque had been born in Europe, where its parents had been the joyous celebration of the success of the Counter Reformation and the reaction to an imposed Classicism; but when the Spanish version of it had been imported into Mexico, it fitted well the seventeenth and eighteenth-century life in the Mexican cities, and especially well that of the increasingly wealthy capital city. Its bizarre and fantastic qualities reflected the bizarre and fantastic life of the city.

In Mexican society, all through that period, there were four distinct castes, the "gachupines," the creoles, the "mestizos," and the Indians. The full-blooded Indians, who were looked upon by the Spaniards as an inferior race, were hardly more than slaves, working in the mines and on the farms; and the mestizos, with various combinations of Spanish, Indian, and even Negro blood, were little better off. All of the important political posts, and offices in the Church as well, were held by the Spanish-born "gachupines"; and the Mexican-born creoles, though of pure Spanish blood, were forced into a life of idleness. But instead of showing resentment toward this discrimination and rebelling against the "gachupines," the creoles imitated the "wearers of spurs." Many of them owned mines or haciendas or had lesser salaried positions in the government, which had been sold to them by the viceroy. They were, therefore, well-to-do and their life consisted chiefly of gambling, love affairs, and attending bull-fights and cock-fights, or parading up and down the streets in silk jackets with gold braid, brightly-colored breeches with silver buttons, wearing silver spurs and broad sombreros, and riding horses equally lavishly adorned and jingling with silver bells; while their ladies and those of the "gachupin" aristocrats, dressed in silks from China, were driven in coaches on which more color and silver and gold were richly displayed.

Thomas Gage, an Englishman turned temporarily a Dominican friar, who spent a number of years in Mexico in the seventeenth century, reported that there were reputed to be more than fifteen thousand coaches on the broad streets of Mexico City at the time of his

visit, which he says, "does exceed in cost the best of the court of Madrid, for they spare no silver, nor gold, nor precious stones, nor cloath of gold, nor the best silkes of China to enrich them. And to the gallantry of their horses, the pride of some adde the cost of bridles and shoes of silver."

In spite of the continued poverty of the Indians who worked in the mines, the almost equal poverty of both Indians and mestizos who worked on the haciendas or eked out a bare existence as muleteers, and the even worse condition of the homeless and half-naked "leperos" who roamed the streets and begged for alms by day and robbed or soaked up pulque by night, the mineral wealth had brought to the "gachupines" and ereoles in the city a joyous mood that was lavish in its expression. Afternoons were spent in gambling, with piles of silver as stakes, or watching cock fights, or at the bull ring; evenings were spent at the theatre, or at masked balls, with their complete change of elaborate costume.

* * *

Traffic with China and other countries of the Far East by way of the Philippines brought an additional influence. Chinese porcelains and other objects of art, silks, and "Spanish" shawls on their way to Europe were landed at Acapulco and carried across Mexico. The result was additional finery for milady and ornaments for milady's parlor; and the effect is echoed even to this day in the lacquer work of Oliná and Uruapan and in the gold and silver filigree to be found in many a city throughout the country. The gilded "retablos" in the churches reflect this "chinoiserie," and the richly decorated fronts of many churches have characteristics which are oriental as well as Spanish Baroque, some of them (the parish church at Zimapan is an example) even East Indian. Mexico's role as a way-station on the route from the Orient to Spain added to the ostentation of the life as well as the arts, until there was something of almost Oriental magnificence in the palace furnishings, in the costumes, and in the parades.

The arrival of a new viceroy from Spain was always the occasion for celebration, and each city from Vera Cruz to the capital tried to outdo the last in banquets, parades, and the pageantry at its bullfights; and upon arrival in Mexico City the extravagance of the entertainment far exceeded that encountered on the way. The mansions and palaces in which the social life centered had to be designed to fit such occasions, and the competition in the luxury of their designs and furnishings was as great as that expressed in the lavishness of the parades and the banquets.

But through it all—all the glitter and pomp of society, the fancy dress, the music and dancing and gambling—was the power of the Church; and above the richly ornamented mansions and palaces and theatres, the towers of churches loomed up, and the tolling of bells was almost perpetual. At the peak of its power the Church owned more than half of the land in use in the country, and an even greater percentage of the capital in circulation. It made loans and acquired mortgages; and from interest and rents and tithes and dispensations its revenue was enormous. Much of its wealth, withdrawn from circulation, was lavished on its buildings and their furnishings. From the Classic and Baroque mixed and confused splendor of the cathedral to the small but elaborately sculptured and carved parish church of the suburbs, there was a constant reminder of the wealth and power of the Church and the influence of what was thought to be religion.

Indeed, if the life and the religion, the Society and the Church, were bizarre and fantastic, they were

well expressed in the architecture. The Baroque, even though originally imported from Spain, and added to by the Indians, and further influenced by the Orient, seemed made for Mexico. Like the life and the religion, it was mundane in conception, florid in execution, and intolerant of restraint. The Baroque "gachupines" and ereoles gambled with their increasing wealth, and the Baroque churches, boastful in expression and triumphant in scale, seemed to express a desire to gamble with God. There was none of the mystic faith that had produced the Gothic churches of Europe, none of the devout missionary zeal that had built the fortress monasteries of sixteenth-century Mexico; it was a blatant materialism that not only expressed unrestrained joy over the increasing wealth and the greater ease, but seemed to defy God to deny entrance to the Kingdom of Heaven, regardless of the lives the none-too-devout worshippers led, provided they lavished enough silver and gold and carved stone and carved wood and gaudy paint on His earthly temples.

Later "Reforms," with their misguided agnosticism taking the place of a misguided, materialistic conception of worship of God, have done away with much of this work, but whatever, if any, the ethical gain, the aesthetic (though pagan and mundane) loss is tremendous; and we cannot now do much more than briefly describe what is left. Even in spite of the wholesale destruction, however, there are still so many examples of Baroque churches in Mexico City that only a few can be mentioned. First mention should probably go to the Church of Santo Domingo.

On the arrival of the Dominicans in Mexico, the first church and monastery for them was begun in 1530 on a site a little to the north of the present cathedral, but the group was destroyed by a flood in 1716. Shortly thereafter, the present Church of Santo Domingo, which faces the plaza of the same name, was begun, and was dedicated on August 3, 1736. With its stately facade of beautiful carving and sculpture (decidedly the worse for the riots which followed the Reform Laws), its fine old tower, and its handsome dome, it is one of the best examples of Baroque architecture in Mexico. Unfortunately, the two fine chapels in connection with it, the "Capilla del Rosario" and that of the "Tercer Orden de Santo Domingo," were destroyed when a street was cut through the west of the church. The interior of the church, cruciform in plan and of fine proportions, still contains a number of lateral altars in the Churrigueresque style which give something of an idea of its one-time splendor. The church is historically famous as having been the seat of the Inquisition in Mexico, the adjacent offices and prison of which are now occupied by the National School of Medicine.

In the heart of the city on the very busy Avenida Madero at the corner of Isabel la Católica, and conspicuous for a tower that is decidedly out of plumb, is the Church of La Profesa, long the Jesuit stronghold in New Spain. The large monastery attached to the church, once celebrated for its splendid mural paintings by Miguel Cabrera, was torn down after the Reform Laws, but the facade and towers of the church are among the best examples of the seventeenth-century Baroque architecture. In the tribune of the church is a fine example of Mudéjar "lucería" ornament (patterns in wood to form intersecting polygons). It was obviously not made for its present location, but was probably taken from an earlier church.

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The Church of Nuestra Señora de la Merced, built early in the seventeenth century and now completely
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Mexico City has Been Freed of Floods

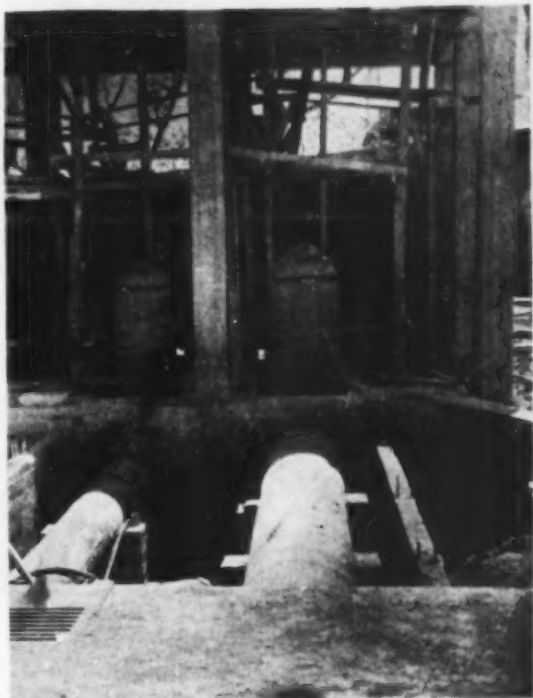
By Gerald Thornby

THE editorial in the last month's issue of this magazine dealt with the grave municipal problem of floods occurring during the months of the rainy season and resulting from the gradually sinking ground-level of this city. Analyzing the causes of this geological phenomenon and presenting suggestions advanced by authorities whereby this problem may be definitively solved, the editorial stressed the serious peril confronted by the city and the need of swift and effective action.

Through the initiative of Lic. Fernando Casas Alemán, the dynamic chief of the Department of the Federal District, such action has been indeed taken in recent weeks, whose results have been so dramatic and immediate as to exceed even the most hopeful expectations. Almost overnight the inundated streets have recovered their former normal aspect, and the population has breathed a sigh of relief. It can be said that while to solve the basic problem of the city's sinking will require prolonged and extensive effort, the problem of floods has been solved by the municipal government for the time being and for years to come.

Compelled by this emergency to draw on its limited budget, the city administration has spent more than forty-seven million pesos on the installation of pumping equipment at various crucial points of the drainage system. These installations serve to force the flow of sewage, greatly swelled by seasonal rainwaters, through the sections of mains that have become contorted by the sinking ground-level and are obstructed through lack of gravitation.

It is calculated that within the next few weeks all of the installations will be completed, thus making the city entirely safe from future inundations. The pumping equipment that is functioning at this time with such highly satisfactory results has been installed at the juncture of the Avenida del Trabajo and the Calle de Mecanicos, and at the crossing of the Anillo de Circunvalación with the Calle General Anaya. These installations represent a respective cost of four and three million pesos, each consisting of six powerful electrically driven pumps.



Pump installations at Avenida del Trabajo.

Pumping equipment installed in Calle Oguzan, to avoid inundations.





Powerful pumps functioning in the
jardín de Santa Catarina.

Through these means it has been possible to restore a normal flow of drainage in the extensive precincts of Guerrero, Santa María, Peralvillo and Morelos, the zone surrounding the Market of La Merced, the streets of Bolívar, La República del Salvador, Mesones and Uruguay, the entire westward region as far as Bucareli, Paseo de la Reforma, the Colonia Cuauhtémoc and adjacent thoroughfares.

The exceedingly heavy rains during the foregoing weeks provided a decisive test of the efficacy of these installations, for the isolated floods these rains produced were slight and of brief duration. It is reasonable therefore to assume that even these will disappear entirely when all the installations are completed and put in operation.

In addition to the pumping stations which are already in operation, the project includes as its salient feature a powerful siphon plant which is being installed at this time at the mouth of the main drainage canal, at the corner of Imprenta and Alarcón streets. This plant will force the sewage from the cisterns into the canal, forcing it over the "hump" and thus eliminating the danger of its clogging the mains or returning to the street surface through the culverts.

This plant consists of a conduit which will receive the waters from the cisterns and impel them to the main canal by the force of fourteen pumps which have been already installed.

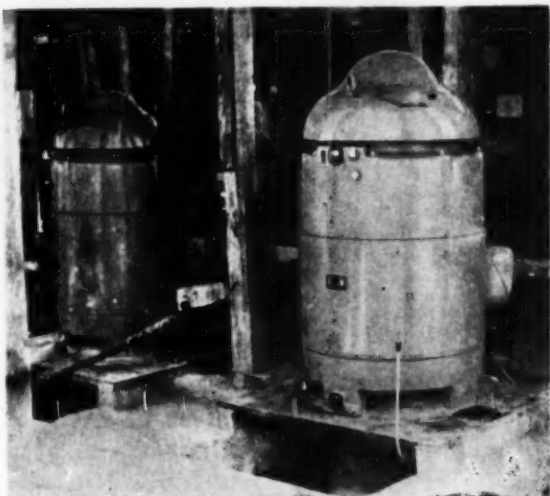
During the month of September the installation of an additional pumping system will be concluded at

the same place, consisting of a conduit which will receive the sewage from four cisterns and send it to the main canal by force of fourteen suction pumps.

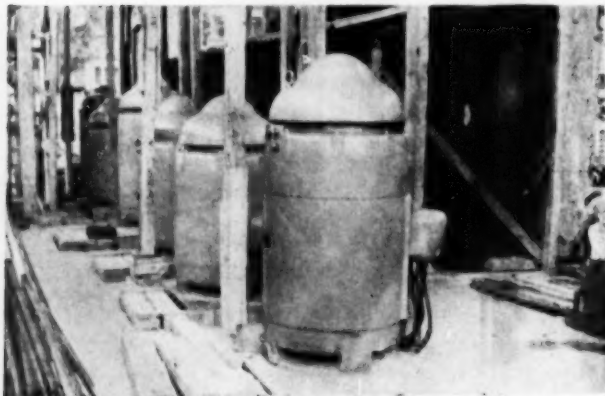
Since all these works will be completed this year, or before the end of President Aleman's administration, the city will be delivered to the new administration free of the flood peril.

The danger of possible epidemics in the hitherto flooded zones has been likewise eliminated through the normally functioning drainage; while the commercial establishments in these zones, whose business has been so seriously affected by the inundations, can now safely resume their normal routine.

The municipal government has, in fact, exerted every effort to prevent the recurrence of floods this



Additional pumps at Avenida del Trabajo.



summer, having intended to complete the pumping installations early this spring. The delay was due to the difficulty in obtaining quick delivery of the necessary equipment from manufacturers in the United States, a large share of whose production is destined for the needs of defense.

Thus, while long-range plans for a complete and permanent solution of the problem are being formulated, the city administration has effectively coped with the serious emergency.

A series of pumps at La Candelaria forcing
the drainage into the Main Canal.



LANDSCAPE AT IXTAPALAPA. Oil.

By Enrique D'Aoust.

Enrique D'Aoust

By Guillermo Rivas

THE Mexican landscapes by the Belgian-Spanish artist Enrique d'Aoust have a singular quality which may be described as that of remoteness.

The impression they create is as if they had been painted a century ago, as if they were the works of some nineteenth century master who beheld these vistas as they probably were then and depicted them in the manner prevalent in his time.

This peculiar quality, however, does not stem from academic sources. It does not entirely pertain to the given style or form, but actually defines the artist's peculiar, highly individual perspective. It defines a specific personal reaction, a feeling of inner remoteness, the recreation of that subtle element of distance which exists in the artist's mind—the distance, psychological or aesthetic, between the scene he perceives and his portrayal of it.

And it is precisely in his ability to express this distance, to remove his landscapes from realistic or commonplace depiction to the creation of illusion, in his ability to paint not in order to achieve a mere literal transcription of a sight but the depiction of a peculiar personal vision, that he achieves his art. For it is through this realm of distance that he imbues his paintings in an unstudied, quite spontaneous fashion with unique significance. He lends them a dreamlike

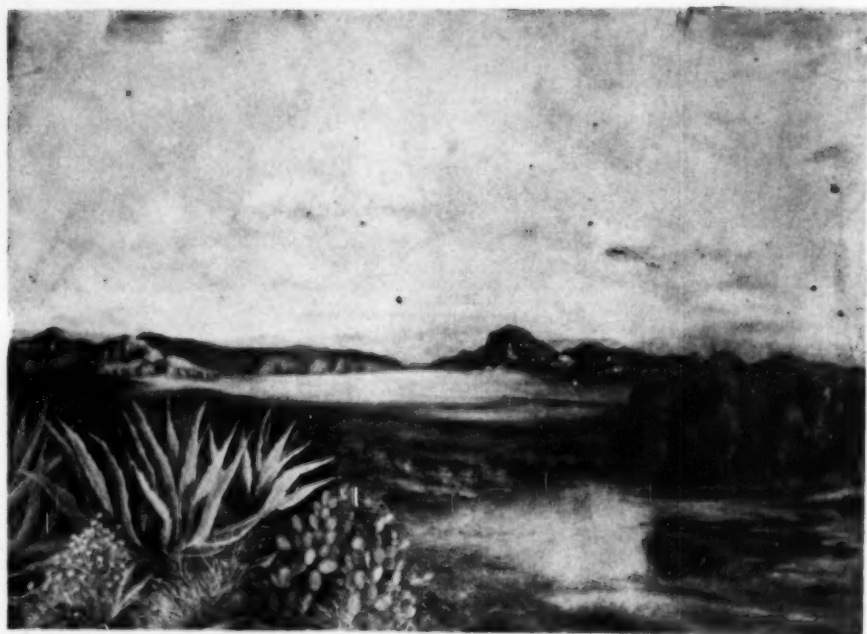
yet luminous quality through a strange fusion of the real and imagined—a sublimation of a thing through its reversion to a primordial state, to a pristine and unblemished wholeness.

It is possible that in his case this peculiar perspective is not based on any definite aesthetic theory, that it is a perfectly normal consequence of his culture, experience and background, of his irremediable artistic foreignness, of his fortuitous inability to get so close to the Mexican scene as to become part of it, to be absorbed by it; and thereby to lose his individuality. It is also possible that his innate sense of distance has made him totally invulnerable to contemporary influence, and that in itself it is the outgrowth of his early influence and training—the legitimate influence of his remote predecessors, the great Flemish masters.

It is to them that he undeniably owes the high excellence of his craft. Indeed, in our slapdash era of artless art this excellence seems almost archaic; it seems to belong to a dead and bygone age. Yet obviously regarding his art not as an ephemeral experiment, not as an innovation, not as an outlet for nonconformance, but as a means of creating beauty, he achieves this beauty deep and intrinsic, through the excellence of his craft.



LANDSCAPE AT TEPOZTLAN. Oil.
By Enrique D'Aoust.



LANDSCAPE IN MORELOS. Oil.
By Enrique D'Aoust.



POPOCATEPETL. Oil.
By Enrique D'Aoust.

Un Poco de Todo

EXPANDING UNIVERSE

THE stellar systems on the outskirts of the known universe are redder than nearer systems. This is called the "red shift." It means that remote stars are rushing away from us. Just as a locomotive whistle howls down as it recedes at high speed, so the stars on the confines of the universe are "howling down" in terms of light.

On spectroscopic plates light dispersed by a prism is broken down into its component wave lengths in a spectrum only one-tenth of an inch long. Lines in that spectrum indicate the presence of particular wave lengths. With distant objects these lines are shifted about one-twentieth of an inch toward the red, which is the longer wave-length end of the spectrum.

Now comes Dr. Milton Humason of the Mount Wilson and Palomar Observatories, both operated by the Carnegie Institution of Washington and the California Institute of Technology, with a report to the Astronomical Society of the Pacific that with the 200-inch Hale telescope of Palomar the red shift has been extended 50 per cent farther into the depths of space. Measured by the red shift, he found that faint distant nebulae are rushing away at speeds that are more than a fifth the speed of light. His results correspond with speeds of 31,000, 34,000 and 38,000 miles a second at distances roughly estimated at 300, 330 and 360 million light-years from the earth.

Light travels about 186,000 miles a second, and one light year is roughly six trillion miles. The most distant cluster which lies in the constellation of Hydra, thus would be about 2,000,000,000,000,000,000 (2,000 million million million) miles away.

All this indicates that the universe is blowing up like a soap-bubble just as the theory of relativity, as modified by Friedmann and Lemaitre, demands. When Dr. Edwin P. Hubble discovered that red-shifts continue to increase with distance, the late Sir Arthur S. Eddington declared that the universe was not only expanding but that it had blown up. Hubble made his observations twenty-two years ago. Dr. Humason extended them with the 10-inch Hooker telescope of Mount Wilson and in 1942 pushed the "law of the redshift" out to about 250 million light years, which was as far as it was possible to probe at that time. At this distance the shifts correspond to speeds of 25,000 miles a second.

From all this it followed that as nearly as can be estimated, red-shifts increase directly with distance at about 100 miles a second for each million light-years. With the 200-inch telescope of Palomar, largest in the world, Dr. Humason again has extended the observed range of the law—this time by 50 per cent. He believes that as soon as suitable nebulae can be found the range will be pushed still farther—out to about 500 million light years. This project may take several years.

The light observed from the most distant cluster studied to date left its source some 360 million years ago. At that time, on the velocity-shift interpretation, the cluster in Hydra was speeding away at 38,000 miles a second. Since then it may have migrated 70 million light-years deeper into space. The message that tells what is happening to it today will reach the earth in several hundred million years.

A most important astronomical milestone will have been reached, if at some point in his continuing study, Dr. Humason should find that more distant

clusters show red-shifts corresponding to velocity increases of less or of more than 100 miles a second for each million light-years distance.

Should the red-shift be less than expected, the conclusion will be inescapable that the rate of expansion of the universe has been speeding up. This would mean that the expansion began earlier than is now inferred, that the "age of the universe" is more than the current estimate of two billion years. Should the red-shift be greater than expected, the reverse would be true.

To some astrophysicists the red-shift may indicate not that the universe is expanding but that light on its long journey toward the earth has lost energy. If so, the very remote stars would be seen by "tired" light which is a little redder than it ought to be. In this case, some principle of nature as yet unknown would have to be introduced to explain the redness.

Whatever the explanation of the redshift may be, Dr. Humason holds that it promises to provide a convenient yardstick to establish the distances of new-found objects in space.

TESTING FOR AN ATOMIC POWER PLANT

A major problem that confronts the engineers who are trying to design a power plant that will be driven by what is loosely called atomic energy is the effect of radiation on metals used in the reactor and other parts. The reactor is the "furnace" where heat is generated. As everyone should know at this late day, neutrons bombard uranium 235, split it and in the process release more neutrons, which in turn are captured by the uranium 238 with which the uranium 235 is mixed and so produce first neptunium, then plutonium.

The neutrons collide with fragments of split atoms and with materials of which the reactor is built. Heat is generated by the collisions. It is this heat that will be used to raise steam which in turn drives a turbine.

The neutrons do not just bounce off the object that they strike. They change it, often make it highly radioactive. It is just as if steel were changed into radioactive lead in an ordinary power plant. Hence it becomes important to find out just how the materials of which a reactor is built are affected by neutron bombardment.

One of the power reactors that the Atomic Energy Commission wants is designed for propulsion of submarines. The power plant is to be built by the Westinghouse Electric Corporation in cooperation with the Argonne National Laboratory.

The unit assemblies, liquids and solid materials that will be exposed to intense nuclear radiation in this power plant are to be tested in a special "hot" laboratory. The technicians enter a set of anterooms where they dress in special clothing, and equip themselves with "exposure badges" that record on film the total amount of radiation to which they are exposed while in the laboratory.

In the laboratory itself is a row of cells in which the radioactive objects are located for observation or test and which are shielded by thick walls of concrete and lead. In each is a window of thick glass-plate and oil, a combination that is transparent and safe. Behind a window there is a curious mechanism that looks as if it came out of a pulp magazine that prints scientific

Continued on page 42

Literary Appraisals

ITURBIDE OF MEXICO. BY Williams Spence Robertson. 361 pp. Durham, N. C.: Duke University Press.

AGUSTIN DE ITURBIDE, the Liberator of Mexico, sprang from a noble family which was seated in the onetime kingdom of Navarre." This is the opening sentence of a monolithic and exhaustive biography by William Spence Robertson, and it gives a pretty good idea of its style. Professor of History, Emeritus, University of Illinois, Mr. Robertson is an authority in Latin-American history. His other works are in the reference work class—and this one belongs on that same shelf.

For the casual reader, however, or even the curious one, who wants to find a human being in a biography, this is likely to be a frustrating sort of book. One has to know a fair amount of Mexican history, and be able to read quite a bit between the lines, to get a living picture of the man Mr. Robertson calls "the Liberator" of his country, but whom most Mexican historians call other things, not so respectful.

The fact is that Iturbide was the "Generalissimo" of his time, the military man who took over in a period of social conflict, and attempted to make order and bring universal happiness by crowning himself Emperor. Iturbide's empire lasted not quite one year. It was a fieldday of silks and plumes and hand-kissing medals, wreaths, knightings and so forth. The man whom Mexico honors as Liberator is Father Miguel Hidalgo, a very humble priest.

One gathers from the impressed tone of Mr. Robertson's book that he admires Iturbide, though he is extremely scrupulous about presenting all the facts, and maintains a scholarly and objective attitude. It is certainly true that Iturbide was courageous, clever, bold and a devoted patriot according to his lights.

What one reads between the lines is more interesting, however. Iturbide, as a Creole (that is, a man of pure Spanish blood but born in Mexico), was barred from the highest posts and the glittering privileges of the top dogs by Spanish colonial regulations. So he thirsted and hungered for those things with the deep irrational ambition of a man of brains and talent. He used all means, including his position as Royalist officer, to devise his own combine for independence. Perhaps his moment of being Augustinus Dei Providentia, Mexici Primus Imperator, etc., was worth the tragedy of wasting his life on that. He certainly does not live with affection and gratitude in the hearts of his countrymen.

A. B.

DEFENSE OF FREEDOM. By the Editors of La Prensa. Illustrated. 315 pp. New York: The John Day Company.

THIS is the history of a particular newspaper, the most famous case of its kind in modern journalism perhaps in the whole history of journalism. The theme, however, is a general one—that when freedom of the press is lost, all liberties are lost. So it was in Argentina when Juan and Evita Perón destroyed La Prensa of Buenos Aires.

If the Peróns had done nothing else in their nefarious career, the suppression of this great newspaper would brand them as tyrants for all time. Institutions,

like countries or cities or individuals, can become martyrs in great causes.

Perón stopped the presses of La Prensa on Jan. 26, 1951, drove its publisher into exile, put its staff out of the plant and hounded them in private life, and he has even given the shell that remained to his stooges who print a newspaper they call "La Prensa." This is all to no avail. In the story here being told one feels the heart-beat of the real La Prensa; one listens again to the voices that Perón stilled.

The tale is told with eloquence and emotion, but with great dignity, by editors of La Prensa who here maintain their anonymity, as they did on the newspaper itself. A number of their editorials are reprinted—worthy lessons on the noble theme of press freedom and, incidentally, on how to write editorials. The translation is excellent and there are careful annotations wherever text references would not be clear to North American readers.

* * *

La Prensa was founded in 1869 by Dr. José Clemente Paz; it was directed by his son, Ezequiel Pedro Paz, a truly great editor, from 1898 to 1943, and it was in the hands of a worthy successor, the grandson of the founder, Dr. Alberto Gainza Paz, when it was closed down last year. It was a unique dynasty dedicated, to the exclusion of all outside interests, to the highest principles of journalism.

Virtue had its solid rewards in fame and fortune, but La Prensa could not remain great except by remaining independent. Perón could not remain dictator of Argentina unless he abolished freedom of the press. This was an old story, repeated in other countries, but what made the case of La Prensa unique was the long struggle it was able to put up and the way the whole free world rallied to its support. It was too great to be destroyed with one blow. This book is therefore a grim warning on how a free press can be killed by a slow and devious process of strangulation.

The coup that was to bring Perón to the top occurred on June 4, 1943. In that year the powerful Subsecretariat of Information and Press modeled on Goebbels' Ministry of Propaganda, was formed. Among other things, it controlled the supply of newsprint and began seizing stocks owned by La Prensa and restricting the importation and distribution of paper. Government organs started attacking La Prensa for "dependence on foreign gold and treason." Huge fines were imposed for outrageously weak reasons. Charges of "disrespect" (desacato) toward the Peróns were constantly made—disrespect being a crime in Argentina today.

The beginning of the end came on Jan. 25, 1951, when the Government-controlled Union of News Vendors demanded to be the only distributors and sellers of La Prensa and made other impossible requests. The next day was the last on which the newspaper was published. The final collapse came on the afternoon of Feb. 27 when goons, working with police protection, killed a Prensa workman and wounded fourteen others who were peacefully trying to reach their plant.

Little remained—the flight of Gainza Paz, who had so bravely fought to the last, the expropriation of the plants and properties, and then the ultimate ignominy, the resumption of publication under the honored name of La Prensa by lackeys of Perón.

The story is tragic, but as it is told here one shares the conviction of the editors, as they express it in a noble dedication "To the Champions of Freedom":

"These ideals will never perish; as long as man exists, they will be the banner of the peoples of the world. The newspaper *La Prensa*, which so long defended them, will not perish either; its spirit lives on, and one day it will reappear in the pages of that newspaper, which was always a proud and faithful expression of the Argentine people."

"Defense of Freedom" tells a story of which newspaper men will always be proud.

H. L. M.

TI-COYO AND HIS SHARK: AN IMMORAL FABLE,
By Clement Richer. New York, Alfred A. Knopf: 1951.
235 p. illus.

IN ORDER TO UNDERSTAND Martinique-born Clement Richer's satire, "Ti-Coyo and His Shark," the reader must keep in mind the following historical facts about this French colony in the Caribbean: On May 8, 1902, Mount Pelée, the island's highest mountain and chief volcano, erupted and wiped out the gay and beautiful city of St. Pierre at its foot. It took ten seconds to obliterate forty thousand lives. Prior to the disaster, control of Martinique was in the hands of heartily disliked white colonials. St. Pierre—called then "the little Paris of the West Indies"—was the center of their culture and wealth. When it was destroyed, so few whites were left that economic rule

passed to a new class of browns. Since then, tremendous resentment has built up between the preponderant Negro population and the mulattoes. The latter are associated as much with special privilege and social ambition as the remaining white colonials are with exploitation, and with reason: the good farming land today is owned by some ten families—about one thousand individuals out of a population of three hundred thousand—who dominate the sugar industry and Martinique's commercial life. It is interesting to note that, politically, Martinique is the most actively and openly pro-communist colony in the Caribbean. Two of its representatives, sitting in the French Assembly in Paris, where Mr. Richer now lives, are communists, and one of them is also mayor of the island capital, Fort-de-France.

Against this background, but without telling the reader these facts, Mr. Richer spins what he admits is "an immoral fable." Published previously in France, where it was hailed as "witty," "amusing," "charming," and "clever," "Ti-Coyo" has been skillfully translated into English by Gerard Hopkins. It undertakes to prove that virtue rarely, if ever, finds its reward. Mr. Richer does a pretty good job of it until one realizes how contrived his yarn really is. It is the story of a young St. Pierre, Ti-Coyo, who earns his living diving for coins tossed from tourist cruise ships. One day he finds a baby shark in a fisherman's net and realizes how valuable a business partner the creature would make. Raised secretly as a pet, Manidou, as the shark is christened, becomes his master's closest friend and confidant. He eliminates all of Ti-Coyo's

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coin-diving rivals and establishes the legend that the boy is a magician, immune to sharkbite.

Before long, Ti-Coyo has the market cornered. His success gives his hitherto scorned family—his hunchback father, Coyoco, and his squint-eyed mother, Dora—new prestige. They begin to grow rich. When Nat the Mulatto organizes a party to hunt down the shark that has taken so many lives, Ti-Coyo manages to have Manidou finish him off. The world is Ti-Coyo's.

Up to this point, Mr. Richer's satire is valid. The reader is saying to himself, "Here is the Caribbean Voltaire." Then the author stumbles, becomes vulgar. Whether intended or not, what may be personal motives and vindictiveness begin to show through. The reader's nose is rubbed into the dirt of race prejudice. For example, because the most overbearing of the French colonials, Enguerrand du Buy de la Monesse de Corasol-Haillennache des Bas-Tillets de la Portemanderie—"the gentleman with five parties"—had once snubbed Ti-Coyo's father, the boy decides to take revenge by marrying the Frenchman's daughter, Lucie. "I know a way of paying back... I can strike at him through his pride and through his affections." Ti-Coyo succeeds because Lucie had conveniently fallen in love with him at first sight.

Mr. Richer's prejudice shows up again when he writes of Ti-Coyo's adventures during the eruption of Mount Pelée. During the holocaust, and after a subsequent tidal wave, thousands of corpses were washed out to sea to be devoured by sharks. "Men women, and children, burned, flayed, and mutilated—were cast up on the coasts of Santa Lucia, Trinidad, Barbados, and Granada. They encumbered the beaches, choked the ports, dammed the estuaries." In complete disregard of health and sanitation considerations, heartless as they may be, Mr. Richer chooses to view the incident thus: "But their troubles were not even yet at an end; Great Britain refused to these foreign dead entry into the territories belonging to her. Orders were issued that these strange, these 'undesirable' immigrants should be kept at bay."

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But it is for the church—the Catholic and the Protestant—that "Ti-Coyo and His Shark" reserves its cruelest barbs. For religious faith, whatever its shortcomings in coping with modern life, Mr. Richer substitutes a false, though convincing, nihilism. Although in at least one instance Ti-Coyo owes his life to the kindness of Pat the Protestant pastor, who gave him and his family refuge, the boy and his father consistently treat the minister with utter contempt. On the Catholic side, the priest of St. Pierre is portrayed as a deserter of his post. "Why?" he mourned afterward, "had I to be absent on that one morning of all mornings (when Mount Pelée erupted)? Only the Devil, whose enemy I have always been, could have brought it about that I should be away at the precise moment he destroyed my church and the best of my parishioners."

"Ti-Coyo and His Shark" is not without its charm, however. There are delightful scenes in which the boy and Manidou play together, swimming, diving, and racing in the sparkling Caribbean surf. Co-coyo and Dora and their ribald love life are presented with genuine sympathy and humor, and the Frenchman "with five parties" is a likely villain. In this way the book resembles the light-hearted West Indian fiction of, say, the Marcelin brothers except that the Haitians are artists for the sake of art, whereas Mr. Richer, native of an island with little or no independent culture, has an axe to grind which takes precedence over everything else.

As an allegory, it is easy to read into Ti-Coyo and His Shark much that may very well not be there.

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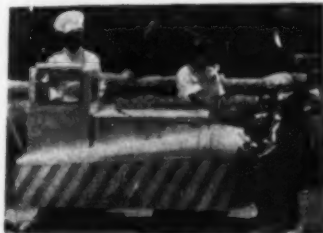
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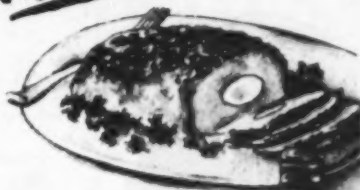
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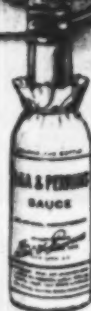
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Perhaps Mr. Richer wants it that way. There is no doubt that he is a writer of talent, but it is a doomed talent so long as he substitutes nothing for something. In the end, *Ti-Coyo* is the triumph of naturalism, of cynical nihilism, of the concept that might makes right, and of the law of the jungle. All in all, it is an unpleasant little book, but one well worth reading. Its sole redeeming virtue (and an important one) is that it hits close enough to the truth to make those who would ignore their obligations to their fellow human beings sit up and take notice.

W. B. A.

Un Poco de Todo . . .

Continued from page 31

fiction. It has a pair of arms with claw-like hands. These are tools to grip, turn or otherwise manipulate the "hot" article. From a desk safely outside the cell a technician operates controls by which the mechanical hands move in an amazingly human way.

Because everything is "hot," a periscope and a telescope are necessary to study an untouchable object in the field of a microscope or to make photographs or photomicrographs, or to weigh something on a precision balance. In the same way the vernier on a cutting tool of a lathe is read. A machine tool in the cell, but operated from outside the wall, can drill or mill metals that have been exposed to fission fragments. In this strange manner, chemists and physicians are beginning to explore a whole new world of radioactivity and fission.



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Current Attractions

SYMPHONY

By Vane C. Dalton

THE SPECIAL concert given by the National Symphony Orchestra at the Palacio de Bellas Artes for the benefit of the National Conservatory of Music under the baton of Carlos Chavez was one of the year's outstanding musical events. The announcement that this would be the final program conducted by Chavez during this year sufficed in itself to fill the auditorium to overflow with the maestro's faithful admirers—a public that over a period of many years has evinced a profound appreciation of his veritable stature as conductor and composer and of his invaluable contribution to the development of music in Mexico. The generous applause of this public, especially that which rewarded the execution of the Saraband from "La Hija de Colquide," the conductor's own composition, defined a twofold tribute.

The applause, however, was not merely that of partial and loyal admirers. It was fully earned by the splendid performance: it signified a personal triumph of an eminent conductor as well as that of the orchestra. There is nothing strange, moreover, in the fact that Chavez has many admirers. Those of us who have followed through many years his career on the podium and have observed the remarkable progress he has made can readily appreciate the extent of his achievement—the inexhaustible energy, tenacity and determination which have given him the lofty position he holds as composer and pianist, and as organizer and administrator which has enabled him to create the finest symphony ensemble in the city. It is because of these multiple talents and concrete achievements that Carlos Chavez is deeply admired by his

numerous friends, and even by his fairminded adversaries (for men whose lives have been as replete with action and achievement as his cannot avoid accumulating adversaries). Hence his appearance on the podium is an infallible assurance of large attendance.

The personality of Chavez is indeed unique in our musical realm. It is to him, more than to any other specific individual, that Mexico is indebted for the symphony music it has today. Starting at the bottom, almost singlehanded he had to create the institution of symphony music, not only artistically but in all its basic aspects. Twenty and some odd years ago, when Chavez began his task, Mexico lacked a permanent orchestra, a musically devoted public or a musical tradition, and it is largely as result of his singular talents and indefatigable effort that all of these exist at this time.

And though he has stated on various occasions that conducting is not the fundamental aim of his career, that it is the medium of expressing his own music and a vehicle for popular musical education, it is hardly surprising that now, when the maestro has reached his full artistic plenitude, he yet continues to grow in stature as conductor.

* * *

Like Toscanini, Chavez strictly adheres to the principle that the best rendition is that which does not de-



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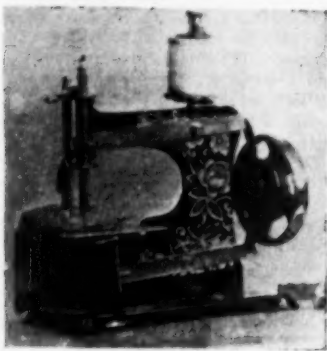
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viate from the composer's purpose and indications. In this special concert we heard a rendition of Beethoven's Fifth symphony that was outstanding because of its interpretive fidelity. The beauty of this work is defined in its superb power, and this can be expressed solely by maintaining the firm flow of its rhythm, the homogeneity of its orchestration and the matchless balance of its harmony. Upon this premise Chavez created his magnificent interpretation.

The rest of the program was made up of works Chavez selected from his most successful past repertoire. In addition to the aforementioned Saraband from "La Hija de Colquide," it included Stravinsky's "Fire Bird" and Ravel's second suite from "Daphnis and Chloe," conducted, as the rest of the program, from memory.

Heartily responding to the leader's guidance, the orchestra performed with highest inspiration, as if thereby expressing its hope that this may not be the maestro's final concert of the year—a hope that I am sure is amply shared by the public.

As head of the government Fine Arts Department, Chavez has a full-time job. It is obvious that with his other multiple responsibilities he can hardly undertake to present a full season of concerts. And yet, though it is lamentable to admit, there is no one else in our midst who could successfully conduct such a season. No other native conductor could elicit such excellence of performance from the orchestra or attract such abundant attendance.

However, at least for the time being, the most we can expect from the maestro is an occasional reappearance in a special concert such as the last, which does not fill our needs, though tends to remind us that Chavez is still the best we have.

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City, conducted by Sergiu Celibidache, at the Teatro Metropolitano, Sunday mornings, September 21st and 28th and October 5th and 12th; and recitals at the Palacio de Bellas Artes, by Alexander Uninsky, pianist, Ida Haendel, violinist, Cilly Wang, dancer, Elizabeth Schwartzkopf, Soprano, and Michelangeli, pianist.

BALLET

Opening on the 21st of this month, a new company, titled Ballet Moderno de Mexico, will present a season of six programs at the Sala Chopin. Headed by Miss Waldeen, who was one of the outstanding fore-runners of the modern dance in Mexico, the new company comprises Amalia Hernandez and Evelia Beristain as choreographers, and the dancers Roseyra Maranco, Alma Rosa Martinez, Bari Rolfe, Benjamin Gutierrez and Kenmbu Lwbaggi. Olga Costa, Lucia San Roman, Dasha and Angeles Garcia Maroto are the costume designers, and Asa Zatz the stage director.

The opening program consists of the following works: "Divertissement" (Mozart), "Homage to Garcia Lorca (Revueltas) and "Against Death" (Bela Bartok), with choreography by Walden; "Sonatas Españolas (Antonio Soler) and Sones Antiguos de Michoacán (native music executed by the Trio Aguillillas), with choreography by Amalia Hernandez, and Domingos en Provincia" (Salvador Contreras), with choreography by Evelia Beristain.

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Art and Personal Notes

FOLLOWING the very successful exposition of paintings by the Russian-American artist Michael Baxte, the Galeria de Arte Mexicano, (Calle de Milan No. 18) is presenting during this month a group of recent works by the Spanish painter Enrique Climent.

THE Galeria Arte Moderno (Plaza Santos Degollado No. 16-C) is showing at this time in its ground-floor salon a series of ink-drawings by the American artist Martha Adams, titled Sicilian Portfolio, while its upper floor salon is accommodating paintings in oil by the Guatemalan artist Carlos R. Lopez. Some of the latter artist's works included in this exposition were reproduced in the last month's issue of this magazine.

PAINTINGS in oil by Ignacio Aguirre comprise the current one-man show at the Salon de la Plastica Mexicana (Calle de Puebla No. 154). This is one of the rare occasions when we can enjoy a comprehensive exhibit of this gifted Mexican artist's work, which hitherto has largely figured in group exhibits.

TWO very interesting exhibits are being offered at this time by the Mexican North American Cultural Institute (Avenida Yucatan No. 63): that of lithographs and paintings in oil by the American artist Howard E. Smith, who has been working for some time at San Miguel Allende; and that of paintings in oil and water color by the Honduran artist Alvaro Canales, Sr. Canales, who received his initial training at the Escuela Nacional de Bellas Artes of Tegucigalpa, Honduras, has been living in Mexico for the last eight years.

A COLLECTION of tapestries by Saul Borrisov comprises the month's exhibit at the Galerías Month (Calle de Hamburgo No. 40).



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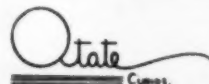
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A QUITE impressive group of lithographs by the American engraver Richard A. Florsheim is on exhibit at this time in the Salon de la Estampa of the Palacio de Bellas Artes.

A NEW art exhibit gallery, Riggs-Sargent Studios (Avenida Galvez No. 25, Villa Obregon, D. F.) is extending an invitation to the public to view a group of abstract composition in gouache by Edna Guek, a New York artist who is spending the summer months in Mexico City.

C ERAMIC sculpture by Siska is currently on show at the Galería de Arte Experimental (Calle de Rhin No. 17).

A COLLECTION of sculptures by Blanche Phillips, a still another American artist working these days in Mexico, is being exhibited by the Galería Arte Contemporaneo (Calle de Amberes No. 12).

E L CIRCULO DE BELLAS ARTES DE MEXICO (Avenida Juarez No. 58) is presenting an exhibition of twenty and some odd paintings in oil by the Spanish artist Mallo Lopez. These consist of landscapes painted in Mexico, Argentina and the United States.

P HOTOGRAPHS by members of the Club Fotográfico de Mexico, on a wide variety of subjects, are exhibited at this club's quarters—Avenida San Juan de Letran No. 80, second floor.

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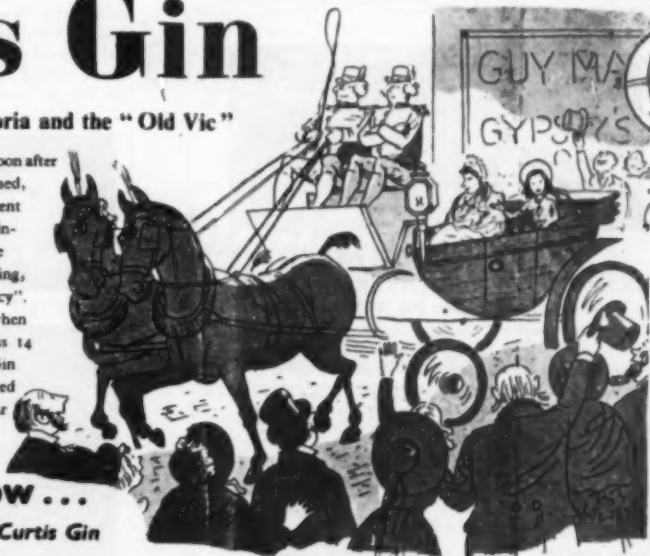
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Continued from page 25

ting Cueva's disgrace and misfortune as its common lot, humbly bore its cross.

But, enigmatically, Cueva alone seemed to bear it lightly. Of them all she was the least concerned. She appeared to regard herself as the victim of an unfortunate prank, and to the final day, defiantly, even facing their anguish, adamantly refused to divulge the identity of the guilty man. And while the parents were crestfallen and resigned, Lucha, never abandoning the hope of final rectification, was determined to find out. Thus, weighing the possibilities of the various men who propitiously dropped out from sight, eliminating after a thorough scrutiny one by one each other, she cast her ultimate secret suspicion on one named Julio Dávalos. To her he seemed the most likely culprit. His affair with Cueva had been of brief duration, though it somehow seemed to be more serious than the others, and of the various rivals he was the first to withdraw. Rich, carefree, self-indulgent, easy-going, he was, she felt, the kind of person who could destroy a girl's life without giving it a second thought.

During the dreadful months of waiting, facing her sister's noncommittal indifference, suffering the anguish and pain the other did not, Lucha's suspicion slowly grew into a positive assurance. Sensing the betrayal, the gross injustice done to her sister even more deeply than if she herself had been its victim, she acquired a consuming hatred for the seducer.

And then, when both the mother and offspring died in childbirth, while the shock was yet fresh, the hatred, now stemming from an incurable wound, became transformed into a blind overpowering urge for revenge. Her sister's life was over; but she could prolong it by identifying herself with it after death, by assuming as a supreme goal, as a sacred obligation, the task to avenge this death.

Within the torment of unremitting grief, her mind guided by this obsessive aim functioned clearly and coolly. Carefully, minutely, she worked out her plan, and calmly set forth to carry it out. Once the conventional period of mourning was over, it was not difficult for her to arrange an apparently accidental meeting



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with the young man. Nor was it very difficult, aided by her utter resemblance with her illfated sister, to draw him to her, to compel his infatuation, and finally to arouse his love. Skillfully, with a spider's patience, she spun her web. It was an incongruous experience of emotion and makebelieve, of burning hate and artifice of love, of a strange affection and even of the gratitude a spider may sense for a witless fly, or a torero for a tractable and responsive bull whom he must destroy in the end.

* * *

She commenced to destroy him the day after they were married. Her prey was now safely in the web, and she could enjoy the sight of its torture; she could shorten or prolong it at her will. Cautiously, thoroughly, she schemed her course, avoiding the peril of overt clash, of open defiance or direct responsibility, creating a situation wherein she seemed to be the helpless victim of a deplorable confusion, of a tragic misunderstanding, and while feigning to strive mitigation getting him more inextricably tangled in the web. It was a subtle undermining process of ruinous betrayal, of a simulated incapacity to either relinquish her grasp or to surrender to him fully, of exacting his love and devotion while withholding her own, or of giving him only enough to keep him in a tormenting state of shifting hope and despair.

The venom of doubt and jealousy she fed him was not generated in direct or implicit suspicion. It was not a case of fighting covert faithlessness. His devouring jealousy was directed at shadows he was impotent to combat. He lived in a perpetual nightmare assailed by relentless phantoms.

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gination, Julio Dávalos was not prepared to face this ordeal. His ingenuous mind could not cope with enigmas; his guileless reasoning brought forth no clue to understanding. He was like someone lost in the impenetrable darkness of a labyrinthine cave, desperately seeking a way out and helplessly drifting further into its dark inextricable depths. And when his artless and unvaluing mind finally capsized in emotional chaos, when totally shorn of perception he yet perceived that since life offered no way out, the only way out was to end it, he yet preserved sufficient strength to do it.

His suicide fed morbid curiosity and speculative gossip: it added another lurid chapter to the engrossing saga of the Pedraza household, and lent it the garish tinge of evil portent. The black shadow of doom settled over the house. In passing it people sensed vague misgivings: they were aware of palpable danger. They were fearful of infection as if passing a house in quarantine. And this fear was not without reason, for like good fortune ill luck has a way of repeating itself.

A few months after Lucha rejoined the household her father died of septicemia which originated in an apparently innocuous ingrowing toenail; while a few weeks later her mother succumbed to heart failure in her sleep. She was left alone in the big and empty house. Still beautiful and young, she shunned all friendly bids or approaches; totally withdrawn, completely amputated from all outside contact, she buried herself alive to be able thus to survive life's irreparable injury. And within this self-obliteration there was yet the sustaining force of accomplished justice—the one supreme enduring consolation that she had achieved a complete retribution for her beloved sister's tragic fate. Life had ended for both, but at least her own life had not been sacrificed in vain. She had attained her purpose, and it was worth the price she had to pay. She never wavered in her seclusion through the passing years. With time it ceased, in fact, to be a hardship and became a completely normal and even satisfactory course of life.

* * *

It had been a habit with her to revise from time to time her sister's garments, now quaint and old-fashioned, guarded inside a bulky mirrored wardrobe, to take them out for an airing in the patio and to hang them back in their place, and to pore over the contents of various ornamental boxes—mostly missives of love and other happy mementoes—kept in her sister's dresser drawers. There was only one small box among the lot that had remained unopened, because she had never

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found its key and in a kind of feeling of reverence was reluctant to force its tiny lock. Through all these years the little box was an inviolate and mysterious keepsake, until one day, as she was rearranging the drawers, it accidentally dropped from her hands. Its fragile lid became detached from its tiny hinges, and its contents spilled on the floor. There was an assortment of odd buttons and beads, pieces of lace and ribbon, and several letters, all addressed in the same firm hand.

She read the letters sitting on the floor, and when she finished she did not have the strength to rise. What she discovered suddenly rendered everything meaningless. Her life, the whole world, of a sudden receded into grotesque unreality. Reading the staggering truth she sought to deny it; she refused to believe it, refused to admit her terrible error, to admit to herself that she had murdered an innocent man, that the only force which sustained her had been a tragic delusion, a lie. But her denial was useless. What the letters starkly divulged was irrefutable.

She could not readily identify the man by the incomplete signature of Gustavo. But as she laboriously probed the hazy past, re-establishing one by one in her memory the identity of each one of her sister's admirers, the image of the man—who during the fatal period of decision would have seemed the least likely of them all—clearly emerged in her mind. The letters, obviously in reply to her sister's futile implorations, cruelly, heartlessly, through a callously cynical denial of guilt and rejection of responsibility, confessed their author's guilt.

Her life had been suddenly shorn of substance and meaning; but she yet had the force to go on. For much as the yearning for vindication sustained her through the initial dreadful ordeal, renewed yearnings sustained her through years after the shocking discovery. This time she could not formulate a plan; her purpose could not be reduced to a definite project. Her foe was totally beyond her reach. But she could yet live on sustained by hope, nurtured by undying hate, guided by a vague yet enduring faith that time in some miraculous fashion would some day provide the opportunity, that in some way the man would end as her belated prey.

When hours later she rose from the sofa and walked through the rooms, everything in them appeared to her strange and remote, and for the first time in her life the old house suddenly seemed to her totally empty.

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Baroque in Mexican Architecture . . .

Continued from page 24

destroyed, was once famous for its "lacería" work. It is probable that many churches which have been destroyed or have been covered by vaults originally had sumptuous wooden ceilings in this most brilliant manifestation of the Mudéjar style of ornament, though very few exist in Mexico today, the most famous example being that of the early Church of San Francisco at Tlaxcala. Most of the extensive monastery in connection with the Merced church has given way, too, to the great Merced Market, but what is left of the eighteenth-century arcaded patio is one of the loveliest in Mexico . . . Until comparatively recently the arcades had been largely plastered over, for the place had been put to various uses including barracks, but since a careful restoration by the Mexican government, the richly carved arches and highly ornamented columns have been revealed in all their glory. The columns of the first story are simple Roman Doric, but with elaborately carved arches and frieze; while on the second story the smaller arches, and the Composite columns as well, are bewildering masses of rich carving. No Florentine palace was ever richer. That patio is one of the architectural "sights" of the city.

The Church of San Juan de Dios, facing a flower market just north of the Alameda, is notable for a recessed portal in the Baroque style enriched by sculptured figures in niches. Erected in 1729, it is one of the few churches in the country with a covered entrance. Of special interest on the interior is the altar of St. Anthony of Padua, a favorite shrine of lovelorn girls, and covered with their votive offerings. A little further to the west, and marking the site on the famous causeway where the greatest slaughter of the Spaniards took place on "La Noche Triste," stands the Church of San Hipólito, built to commemorate the final victory over the Aztecs which was achieved on that saint's day. The present building was begun in 1599 to replace an earlier adobe structure and was dedicated in 1739. Badly damaged by an earthquake shortly thereafter, it was reconstructed with richness of ornament on the upper part of the tower. A peculiarity of the design is the diagonal placing of the towers, only one of which, that facing the street corner, was carried to completion. The small Church of La Enseñanza, near the cathedral, built in 1754, has a unique, richly ornamented Baroque facade and a profusely decorated Churrigueresque altar of a later date. The Church of San Fernando, 1735-1755, at one time one of the richest and finest churches of the city, has a massive, pink stone Baroque facade and it once had magnificent Churrigueresque



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altars, which have disappeared; while the Church of Regina, 1605-1731, has an exceptionally fine, richly composed Baroque tower.

To the south of Mexico City, not far from the suburb of Coyoteacán, is a town which in Aztec times was dedicated to the war god, Huitzilopochtli, and named for him "Huitzilpocho." Because of its special pagan significance it was promptly seized by the Spaniards, its temple was destroyed, to be replaced by a Christian church, and the place has ever since been called by its original name as nearly as the careless Spaniard could pronounce it, namely Churubusco. The first church built there was destroyed in 1660, and in its place the Franciscans erected a new Baroque structure in 1678, which they dedicated to St. Matthew. Like the Merced monastery, it had long been neglected; but it has recently been restored by the National Department of Colonial Monuments, and is being converted into a museum. The entrance to the church is in a restrained early Baroque style, with plain, paneled Doric pilasters framing the simple arched doorway. In a niche above, flanked by small pilasters supporting a broken pediment, stands a sculptured saint; while on either side, over the pilasters of the entrance, are huge heraldic devices carved in stone. But of greatest interest is the quaint little chapel of San Antonio Abad (Saint Anthony, the Abbot), nestling against the base of the tower. Its walls and its dome are covered with polychrome glazed tiles in chevron patterns of yellow and black, and blue and white.

Of early educational buildings in the Baroque style, which have been put to a variety of uses, there are a number of fine examples. The former Colegio de San Ildefonso, built 1749 as a consolidation of several Jesuit seminaries, and now housing the National Preparatory School, is a massive structure with a facade of "tezontle" trimmed with grayish white "chiluea." The Council Room now contains the former choir-stalls of the old San Agustín Church, dating from about 1692 and probably one the finest examples of wood carving in Mexico. They portray Biblical scenes in bold relief. When the church for which they were made was dismantled in 1861 to be converted later into the National Library, these masterpieces of wood carving were stor-

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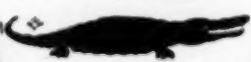
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ed in the lumber room of the National Museum, where they remained for thirty years, but were fortunately found to be in good condition and were finally installed in their present location. The main patio of the school is now embellished with frescoes by the modern artist Orozco, while in the auditorium are encaustic decoration by Diego Rivera.

The Colegio de la Paz, originally known as the Colegio de San Ignacio because of its dedication to San Ignacio de Loyola, but most popularly called Las Vizcainas, is similar in character to San Ildefonso, though hardly so severe. It gets its name Las Vizcainas, "The Basques," because of its foundation by three wealthy and pious Biscayan merchants in 1732. It seems that the three founders, Don Ambrosio Meave, Don Francisco Echeveste, and Don José Aldaco, were walking together in the neighborhood and were shocked by the neglected appearance and evil language of a group of ill-clad little girls whom they encountered. Learning that these children had no means of instruction, the pious trio decided to establish a vocational school for girls on that spot. They forthwith purchased the site, and on July 31, 1734, the cornerstone of the present immense structure was laid. Although its massive walls have sunk and the building has deteriorated from lack of upkeep, it is one of the most impressive examples of the Baroque style in the city. The entire building is faced with "tezontle," and the facade, which is nearly 500 feet long, has two rows of gigantic windows, all with deeply splayed jambs, and some fine stone carving on the three principal doorways; while the great central paved and arched patio is one of the largest in Mexico.

* * *

Of strictly secular architecture of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries there is a great deal. It was the wealth of public buildings and signorial mansions that prompted Baron von Humboldt, visiting there in the early part of the last century, to describe Mexico City as "the City of Palaces." Although in many of them commerce has taken the place of aristocratic "gachupin" and creole hospitality, much remains to remind one of the architectural extravaganzas of viceregal days. The soft red color of the "tezontle," commonly employed in combination with the warm grayish white of "chiluca," often richly carved, to form a striking contrast in the sparkling sunshine, may be seen on many a street throughout the city to proclaim a palace of the aristocracy of New Spain. The vicinity of Santo Domingo contains a number of examples, not quite what they used to be

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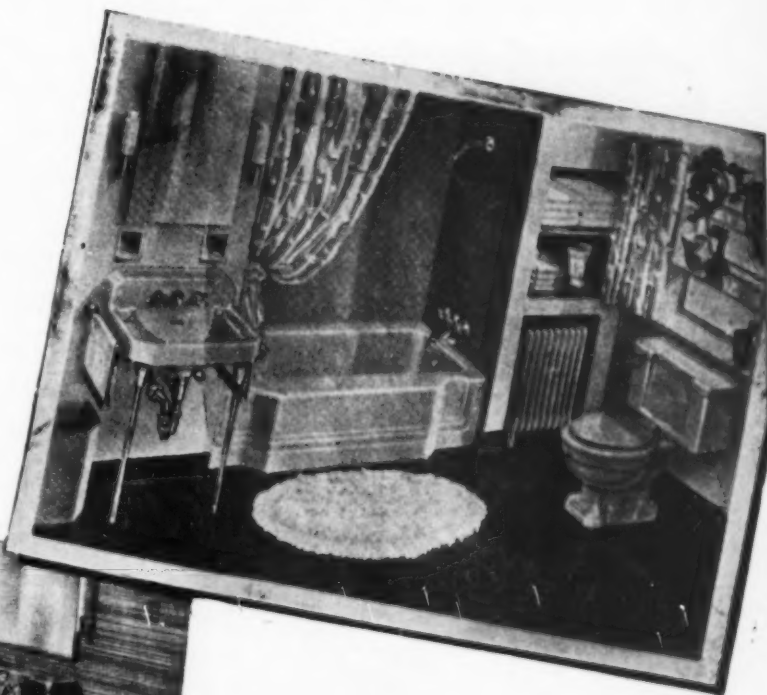
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but still exceedingly interesting for their architectural details. East and south of the Zócalo, too, are many buildings which were formerly palaces, now cut up into tenements or cheap hotels with stores below; but among them can be found many a gem of Colonial architecture. One can often see shrines built high up in the corners of these early buildings.

Just west of the cathedral is the National Pawnshop, Monte de Piedad, housed in a palace of restrained Baroque architecture. The building much remodeled was the first viceregal residence, and is of additional interest, historically, as occupying the site of the Aztec palace where Cortés was first entertained as a guest of Montezuma and where Montezuma later was killed.

Occupying a conspicuous position on the Avenida Madero is the building commonly known as the Turbide Palace because it was occupied from 1821 to 1823 by the first Mexican Emperor after the War of Independence. Designed and built in the eighteenth century by Francisco Guerrero y Torres for the Marqués del Jaral de Perrio, it is one of the richest and best-preserved Baroque seigniorial mansions in the city. Its four-story facade (an unusual height for a Colonial building) is conspicuously designed of red tezontle trimmed with richly carved stone in a variety of motifs at the various levels. The monumental two-story entrance is especially lavish in detail. A pilaster covered with carving stands on a pedestal on either side of the high doorway, while above, two life-size figures, standing on glorified volutes, face a great floral-filled Florentine panel which helps to support an elaborately moulded cornice extending the length of the building at the third-story window level. For many years (1855-1928) the building served as a fashionable hotel, and the carriages of the elite used to line up in front of its great carved doorway. The large paved central patio has been covered over, and the building now houses shops and offices.

The same architect, in 1769, designed the house of the Condesa San Mateo Valparaíso, now occupied by the National Bank of Mexico. The stately facade and fluted pilasters framing the windows of both first and second stories; while on the third-story corner tower is an intricately carved stone shrine. Such a third-story room built on the roof as a corner tower, with a niche containing a statue on the corner, was a common feature on Colonial houses, and was called the "Watchman's Room," "Cuarto del Velador." Such corner towers had been commonly employed in Spain, and were a survival from ancient castle planning. Two especially interesting examples of such a Watchman's Room, dating from about 1690, and of



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the usual "tezontle" and "chiluca," are to be found on the corner of the Calle de la Moneda and what used to be known as the street of "El Indio Triste," "The Sorrowful Indian."

Not far south of the Zócalo is the house of the Condes de Santiago de Calimaya, originally built in 1528 by a cousin of Cortés, and still in the possession of descendants of the original owner. Stones from the great "teocalli" are said to have been used in its construction, and the cornerstone is supposed to have been placed by Cortés. The building was completely reconstructed in 1774 in the Baroque style. It has an exceptionally richly carved entrance, noticeable not only in the stonework—engaged Ionic columns supporting an entablature with elaborate dentils and a mixtilinear arch over the doorway—but in the woodwork of the doors, beautifully designed and carved. Of curious interest are the gargoyles carved in stone in imitation of cannon. The house of the Conde de Heras, which now serves as the Main express offices of the National Railroads, is a striking example of an old seigniorial residence, with gray stone trim around the entrance and on the corner of the building richly sculptured. The elaborate carving on the corner, especially, is florid Churrigueresque in character, but with detail that is a curious combination of Florentine motifs and native nonchalance of application.

There are many other palaces of similar character scattered throughout the city. Most of those in the business districts have been put to commercial use, and a number of others in outlying districts which had been allowed to deteriorate are now being restored by the government. Of quite different character from these already mentioned is the one-story Casa de Mascarones, so called because of the decoration in the form of large stone masks. The highly ornamented engaged columns which are evenly spaced along the rusticated stone facade are actually more Churrigueresque than Baroque. Spaced between them are richly ornamented windows covered by heavy wrought-iron grilles. The house, which was designed by the versatile Guerrero y Torres, was left unfinished on the death, in 1771, of its owner, the Marquis of the Valley of Oaxaca, after he had already spent \$100,000 of the National University.

Gathered together, the Baroque palaces of Mexico City would make an imposing array, and if one could see them thus, it would not be hard to appreciate the title given the city by the Baron von Humboldt.

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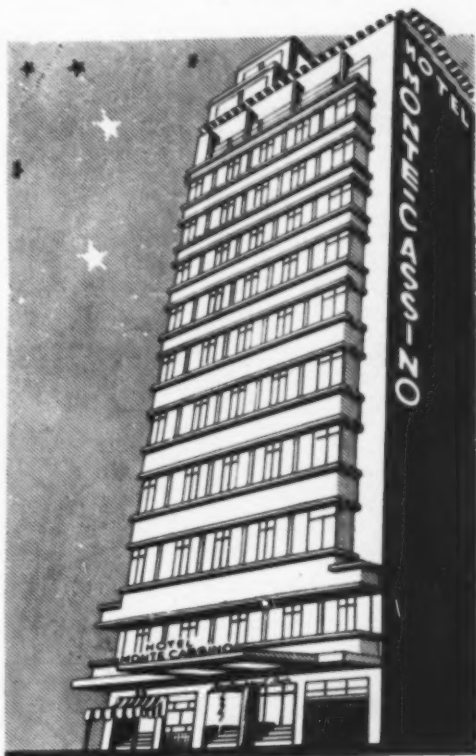
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Man versus the Land . . .

Continued from page 22

change in farming methods is necessary to avoid further deterioration of the soil and improve crop yields.

The Forest Service, barely sketched out before 1910, has taken on new vitality. It is now one of the fundamental concerns of the government, which is aware that it is facing a problem basic to the nation's future. The Forestry Law three years ago laid the groundwork for an intensive job of reforestation. Recently a campaign was started to get all farm boundaries marked with tree hedges. If these provisions are carefully enforced, we should begin to see some results in a few years.

The full meaning of the challenge became evident some years ago when a vigorous irrigation program revealed that a regular supply of the missing moisture was not enough. To protect the investment, it was essential to prevent newly irrigated land from being eroded, impoverished, or leached. So a Soil Conservation Office was created. Three years ago this office was promoted to a higher status in the Ministry of Agriculture, with a bigger budget. Now it not only works directly to protect our soil, but also, through frequent regional conferences, strives to awaken farmers' interest in the problem.

The Fish Services, put on a solid basis in 1917, are another direct outgrowth of the Revolution. After going through various stages, they presently form part of the Navy Ministry and are charged with studying questions of development and protection of our sea, lake, and river resources. Our fishing industry is small, but it could become an important element in our future economy.

Yet the best hope for a real solution to conservation problems lies in education. For whatever steps we take now to defend our natural resources, however effective, can be only temporary measures, requiring costly supervision to see that they are kept up. Only education can bring true respect for the laws of nature

and help us build a sound conservation policy. It is up to the schools, which mold tomorrow's citizens, to imbue students with respect for the elements from which man derives his very existence.

Fortunately, much is being done along these lines in Mexico today. Primary and secondary school curricula have been carefully revised to introduce the basic concepts of conservation wherever possible. Courses dealing specifically with conserving natural resources are now offered at the Teachers College—where Mexico's secondary school teachers are trained—at the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters in the University, and at the School of Biological Sciences in the Polytechnic Institute. Because of the nature of these institutions, the courses do not reach the masses. Yet the small, select groups they do touch are the very ones that will soon wield the greatest influence in national life, so that in a few years conservation concepts may well be a part of the heritage of our youth everywhere.

Along with systematic classroom campaigns, the Ministry of Public Education has undertaken extensive publishing work in this field during the last five years. Under the leadership of the distinguished educator Jaime Torres Bodet, now Director General of UNESCO, the Ministry created the Biblioteca Enciclopédica Popular (Popular Encyclopedic Library), a collection of small volumes, none exceeding a hundred pages, to sell for the equivalent of less than ten cents U. S. Editions of twenty-five to seventy-five thousand copies quickly sold out.

To do justice to its title, the series must include a wide variety of works, but it has already published four on conservation problems, as well as others bearing indirectly on the subject. First came William Vogt's *El Hombre y la Tierra* (Man and the Land); then two booklets by the present author, *Los Recursos Naturales de México* (Mexico's Natural Resources) and *La Protección a la Naturaleza* (Protection of Nature); and finally, *El Bosque y la Conservación del Suelo* (The Forest and Soil Conservation) by Wagner and Lenz.

Thus we see that while destruction of our property through centuries of careless exploitation has created a vital and pressing problem, our country has begun to realize the magnitude of the task before it. Most of the remedies are too recent for us to judge their results. The future will depend on the degree of energy and good sense with which the policy is directed and on the material means available for carrying it out.

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Mexico, along with many other countries, is now confronted with a historical crisis: either it will save what remains of its resources and develop them for ed. To continue the criminal abuse of the past would obviously be suicide.

Pito Pérez . . .

Continued from page 20

giant gentlemen he had seen going through the ante-rooms.

"Wait a few minutes," said the Prime Minister to him, with great affability.

The visitor settled himself in a corner of the office, waiting for a moment when the President would be free to talk of old times at his ease. But he saw with surprise that the gentlemen present did not behave as did those who had passed through the ante-rooms. These men, so haughty before, now talked in low voices with their heads bowed; they walked on tiptoe and, they went out of the office as though leaving a sickroom.

At last the President was alone. Turning to his friend, he said: "Well, what are you doing here? What can I do for you?" But the friend gazed absent-mindedly at the door of the office, shaking his head sadly.

"What are you looking at?" asked the President.

"At that door that divides the true from the false, the door of dissimulation, of transformation. Before they come through it the high officials hide their rings, their gestures, their ideas. On the other side of that door, they are other men; men who have forgotten your principles; men who betray you by their very bearing. Outside they despise all men; inside here, they don't have the courage to talk to one man. Poor creatures! And whose fault is it, tell me -- yours or theirs?"

The President, thinking his friend had gone mad, allowed him to leave the place without lifting a hand to stop him.

The story is not very much to the point, but I tell it because I was reminded of it by Vasquez and the judge. Through them I learned to abominate the justice of this world with all its trickery and its evil.

"Alas, the poor people! I advise them always to respect the law and to obey it, but to spit on its representatives."

(To be continued)

Oaxaca . . .

Continued from page 16

out a child or a dog to lead her. She is under twenty and wears her rebozo like a turban in the Biblical fashion. Her features are good except for the blank eyes, which are the color of Malaga grapes. You give her money, and within an hour she is back, with her cupped palm making a shadow athwart the table, as if collecting tribute for the privilege of sitting at the tables.

Another beggar, a man, is more spectacular. He is thin and dramatically dark, with Spanish rather than Indian features. He squirms his way about on his palms and his bottom, for he has no legs. They have been cut off at the rump. He moves like some strange denizen of the deep that is out of its element on sandy earth, but determined to overcome natural laws and survive. His rear end is encased in thick leathers, so that he will not wear the meager buttocks completely to the bone. Though the legless man moves in jerks and writhings, he makes the circuit of the portales and the shaded walks of the alameda with

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Neither begged, I was told by one of my newly made acquaintances, because they were forced by necessity. They begged for the sociability or the act, as much timeliness as the blind girl with her two good legs and sure-footed tread.

The town fathers had repeatedly offered the repulsive fellow a comfortable pension if he would remain in seclusion at home. But he had firmly declined the municipality's offer again and again. "What fun would I have if I stayed like a rat in a dark hole?" he pleaded. "Who would come to see me? How would I hear the news of the world? I am yet alive, and while I breathe I must be with my fellows. Each day's business is an adventure with me. I am a sorry sight, yes. I know I make genteel people shudder. But am I not an asset to their morale? They look at me and give thanks to God they are not in my legless case, no matter what their misfortune. No, no! So long as I can wriggle on my hands and my butt, I intend to enjoy the companionship of the plaza. When I can no longer navigate on my own power, kill me. But don't pension me, for the love of Christ, and shut me away from the world."

Among the Guests . . .

Continued from page 13

the snoods of fat, it was. Her white hair was regimented; her clothes were pressed to crispness. She and Verna eyed one another critically.

"And here you are in this tiny village, and all Mexican furniture, and how nice that you let your manservant wear that pink satin shirt. I love things authentic."

Just then Lola, who was helping Aurora with the washing, came dragging along to ask me something about starch. She had a big man's sombrero on the back of her head, like a huge halo, and she was sucking a mango. She held it in her fingers and between sucks said what she had to say. She was not being disrespectful. She had on her hat, and she was eating a mango, and she wanted to ask me something, so she went right ahead. Mrs. Cafferty blanched, and right in the middle of a sentence Lola let out a terrific belch. She is undoubtedly one of the most powerful belchers in Mexico.

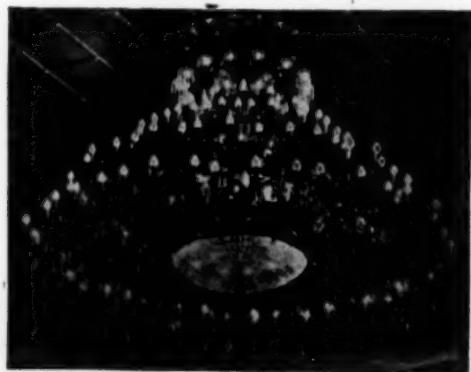


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Mrs. Cafferty continued to be very cordial and when she left said she would write to reserve a room as soon as she was able to come. But she never came.

DOCTOR Téllez Macías came wading out of the lake, shaking water out of his hair and smiling his genial, kindly smile.

"This afternoon we leave," he said cheerfully. "You see, tomorrow morning my wife's brother-in-law passes through Guadalajara on his way to Los Angeles by air, and we could talk to him for fifteen minutes at the airport, and when we saw that launch come in, we thought of it, and I talked to the owner, and he is coming to fetch us at four o'clock."

Mexicans, though often dilatory and procrastinating, are also the most abrupt people in the world, and I ought not to have been surprised. At noon they will suddenly decide to go away for the week end, do nothing at all about it till eight o'clock, and then suddenly, in a quarter of an hour, pack and set out. But in Ajijic, where so much has to be brought from outside, it is very hard to keep house unless you can calculate some days ahead. The doctor and his wife had been pleasant guests and the children relatively little nuisance, and I did not want to make any unpleasantness. But I realized that in the future I should have to arrive at some understanding with my guests about their length of stay.

At half past three the whole family was ready; punctually at four the launch came; and then the older old lady and the younger old lady started unpacking and the younger old lady started unpacking and repacking; the doctor's wife said her hair wasn't dry yet, and the doctor and his children decided to have a last swim, which entailed more unpacking and repack-



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ing. Just when it seemed impossible that the family would really leave that day, they all dressed, gathered their things, said charming and polite good-bys to every-one, got quickly into the launch, and set off. The smallest girl called something to me as I stood on the mole.

"She says," shouted the doctor above the launch motor, "when the German sausage dog, the Tippetty, has little creatures, she would like to have one."

"Do you know," said Candelaria, "that in twenty-nine days the more ancient señora ate one hundred and seventy-four pesos of sardines? For each tin I made a mark here on the plaster, with my thumbnail, and I have just counted them, and I know that I have reason, because the Señor Professor had calculated the same, as he told me, for he said that six pesos a day for sardines left very little for everything else, and tea, which the more ancient lady always drank, is dear too, and the Señor Professor said you were not a true man of negotiations, though it is not for me to say, but you will know."

Silver Merchants . . .

Continued from page 10

Many who started on the long journey never returned. The twisting trail was ideal for ambushes, same bracelets, earrings, brooches, rings, and belts much safer for the good business of thievery than the seas coursed by the plate fleet. Even the occasional haciendas and inns that gave shelter at night were not safe. Acapulco, disease-ridden and lawless, was an infamous hellhole.

Silver was not good business for the Indian slaves who died by thousands in the fabulous mines. Nor was it much better for Efraín's predecessor, the anonymous craftsman who hammered plate for Spanish churches and tables, who cut jewels for dons and their ladies. It was good for the mine owners, and for the grandees of imperial Spain—while it lasted.

It lasted three centuries. Spain's greed and the abuses in the mines were responsible for the war of independence and the prolonged disorders that ushered in the Republic. No longer did the Manila galleon drop anchor in Acapulco's harbor, or the plate fleet in Veracruz. Who wanted silver? With Mexico engaged in protracted civil war, who was there to buy?

In Taxco the mines moldered. In Guanajuato, that queen of cities the arched Spanish bridges fell piece by piece into the river below; the pink stone palaces lost carved cornices and coats of arms; birds nested in the superb Valenciana church which had been built in pious vainglory. Along the silver trail a new dan-

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ger appeared. Besides the brigands, rebel guerilla bands were active. Military posts were built on strategic heights overlooking the twisting thread.

Times change and men are uprooted. Slowly the craftsmen forgot the secrets of their trade.

The new day was long in coming. It waited upon the stabilization of the Republic. Silver was needed for currency, and for trade with industrial Europe and the United States. Mines began to work again in Guanajuato, Zacatecas, and Pachuca.

Trails became roads, and a new kind of traveler appeared on them—the tourist. He discovered the old silver trail. On it was Cuernavaca, thriving in its rich valley so near the capital. On it was the village of Taxco, precariously clinging to life above its dead mines. And at the very bottom was a stinking, festering port town among virgin white beaches, lagoons, inlets, jungle, and splendidly lonely cliffs—a potential Eden.

The men who died on it and the men who killed would not know the silver trail now. It is a clean paved highway. Taxco has become an artists' colony, Acapulco a famous resort.

As it was a yanqui, Charles Barnard, who made Acapulco bloom again, so it was another, William Sprattling, who settled in Taxco and revived the silver craft. That was about twenty years ago, twenty years of good business.

The Manila galleons are not even a memory, but once more the old trail is the silver road. With a difference, however. The flow is not south but north, and its outlet is not the Spanish empire but the American. Silver plate for John Smith's dinner table and trinkets for his wife go out in his baggage, and in big commercial shipments to North American stores. Up the road, from the south come apprentices, skilled workers, and maestros like Efraín González, looking not for a fortune but for a decent living.

Efraín the businessman has nothing in common with the craftsmen of Spain's tutelage. For that artist it was practically impossible to make an exact copy. Something original, something of himself and of In-



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dian Mexico, went into every piece he hammered, cut, and polished.

Today the big workshops and a few smaller artisans in Taxco supply the original designs. Those that become popular and are not difficult or costly to make are copied by maestros like Efraim. Good business is volume, not quality. The handcraft is half mechanized with dies, molds, and electric buffers. Speed is all important.

Silver is not good business for Efraim's four workers and two apprentices. "I work from seven in the morning until eight at night," says Luis Rojas, who came up the silver road from Acapulco. "I get paid by the piece. It is hard to live on my six pesos a day."

A skilled worker, no longer apprentice, Luis takes the silver from the sheet to the finished product. He can turn out fifty bracelets in eight days. A tourist will pay sixteen pesos, perhaps more, for one of those bracelets.

And now Luis and the five who sit with him at the work table have been told that they must go. "With costs rising, silver is becoming big business," says Efraim. "I am a small man. I must close down."

In the plaza, middleman Agapito Ruiz is not interested in Efraim's troubles. So long as he can buy cheap and sell dear, life is good.

All along the silver road, and beyond, you see the same bracelets, earrings, brooches, rings and belts. But they vary greatly in price. They are more expensive in the shops, of course. You do not, however, expect Agapito, one of a long line of competing sellers, to be charging much more than his near neighbor. With gringo shrewdness you figure it out: the same product, overhead costs for the street stand, and plenty of competition—surely the same price, more or less!

"How much?" you ask, fingering the earrings cleverly made into miniature lanterns.

Agapito gives you his toothless smile. "Twenty-four pesos."

If, trusting in the logic of your reasoning, you buy immediately, Agapito's smile changes to a look I have

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come to recognize as restrained contempt. At one stroke he will have made a percentage of profit almost as great as Señor Abe's in his big business of slums. But Agapito is not pleased with an easy transaction. Unlike Efraim, he is at once a good businessman and an artist. His artistry lies in bargaining. He is happy only when both facets of his character find full expression.

Even if you are a trained bargainer yourself, you will go down to defeat before Agapito. At the other stands the price for those earrings, after brief routine haggling, is twelve pesos. With Agapito you pay sixteen, fighting every inch of the way down from his outrageous asking price, and coming away filled with the sweet illusion of victory. That illusion, masterfully created by Agapito, is an over-value. You pay for it.

When I asked Agapito to let me take his picture, he said promptly, "Five pesos."

"Fifty centavos," I countered.

"So many children have I," Agapito said, "that they cannot be counted. I must feed them. Three pesos, Señora. Cheap."

"One peso," I said. "Not a centavo more."

"I am an old man," cried Agapito, in a burst of mock rage, "but not a fool! One peso for a picture!" He turned away and folded his arms, brooding on this great wrong.

I took two calculated steps toward the next stand.

"Two pesos seventy-five," said Agapito. "This because you are an old friend."

We settled finally for a peso fifty.

Agapito Ruiz could make anything good business—even silver.

The Pottery of Ancient Mexico . . .

Continued from page 12

cret of the process is lost, but rather that the wax used in the processes melts and runs off, and so becomes "lost." This technique is also named, "negative



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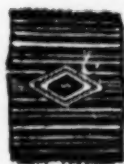
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painting." Hot wax was applied to the vessel with a brush or stick, in a definite pattern, after which the whole vessel was dipped in a paint slip, thus covering both the vessel and the wax. Then the vessel was put into an oven where, upon heating, the wax melted and carried along with it the paint that was on top, leaving the clay of the vessel exposed. In the places not covered by the wax, the paint remained untouched.

A technique for which no really fitting name has yet been found is that in which a thick coating of some color is applied to the vessel. This is then cut away in certain spots to form a design and another color is applied to the cut-out area. The second color is then cut away in spots, and perhaps the first color also, and a third color is then applied, and so forth, until possibly a total of five colors have been applied. The final result is a single thickness of paint, well fused together, instead of many layers one on top of the other.

A novel technique was to allow paint to drip on the vessel and then run freely, while the vessel was slowly turned. This left a series of wavy trails which continued until the paint stopped running.

Vessels were also decorated by punching the wet clay with the fingers, sticks, blades and wedges. The wet clay was also pinched between the fingers, making a pattern of raised ridges. Sometimes sticks were punched all the way through the clay, leaving a perforation or series of perforations of various shapes.

There was nothing to prevent the ancient potter from combining any of the above described pottery decoration techniques to give the most pleasing effects. It was not unusual to find five or six different techniques used on one piece.

Utilitarian pottery, destined for heavy household use, is usually thick, coarse, sturdy and obviously quickly made. But even this coarse pottery usually has some touches of decoration on it to relieve the monotony of the bare clay.

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It is, however, in the ceremonial pottery that the ancient Mexicans excelled. This is the kind that exists in the showcases of many museums of the world. There is such a wealth of variations in ceremonial pottery that the subject can only be treated fully or fairly in a separate treatise. Even so, it would be difficult to give a complete exposition of the different forms that have already been found, not to mention the various techniques and designs. This is further complicated by the fact that each separate culture had different designs and forms and techniques at different periods. We cannot yet say that we have found examples of all the different periods, nor even that we have found evidence of all of the different cultures. New finds are made each year, and will still be found for a long time to come. Vast parts of Mexico are still almost unknown archaeologically, and only a handful of archaeologists are employed at present in searching for new horizons.

We know that pottery was traded extensively, as we have been able to trace pottery originating in one place taken to other places three and four hundred miles away. The ancient chroniclers tell us of large bands of wandering merchants that were sent out from ancient Tenochtitlan to all parts of Mexico and Guatemala. We are also told that the gigantic market places of Tenochtitlan and Tlateloleco were always crowded with people coming from many leagues away, bringing with them goods to trade, among which pottery was a major item. The ruler of Tenochtitlan, for instance, would only deign to eat off of the very finest pottery made in Cholula.

Much of this pottery is exquisite, and the forms are a delight even to eyes trained only to European standards of beauty. All of their pottery was made by hand, yet one would swear that it had been made by machine or on a potters' wheel, as it is so symmetrical and the walls are of such even thickness that



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It seems impossible for it to have been shaped by the unaided hand. Of course a stick or stone was used by the pater to help smooth the walls, which were mostly built up from coils.

It has been stated that the Maya of Yucatan used a type of flat disc of stone which rested on the ground and which they turned with their feet, thus giving a rotation to the mass of clay being shaped with the hands. However, it is still an open question whether this was a pre-Hispanic technique or if it is an offshoot of the potters' wheel. In any event their hand work was marvellous, and even today Mexican craftsmen turn out a hundred bowls in succession without a potters' wheel, and the differences between them in thickness of walls and in diameter or height, must be measured in terms of tenths of centimeters.

We have many whole pieces of pottery which have survived the wrath of Spanish conquistadores and priests due to the fact that, in most of Mexico, there was a belief in a life after death. This belief led the people to bury their dead with many useful articles that they could use either in the next world or on the way there. Of course pottery is the major item found in the graves. In this grave "furniture" we find pots, cups, vases, plates, pitchers, ollas and bowls used as containers for food and drink. We also find much effigy pottery in the shape of dogs, ducks, monkeys, jaguars, warriors, women, children and hundreds of other shapes.

These effigies were probably made to serve as companions, counsellors and servants for people in the other world. Some may have been made as identification for the dead person, to insure that he would be recognized by whatever deity he encountered. Some were probably made for more worldly identification, or for the sake of vanity. Some may have been portraits of the deceased, or of his wife, children or animals. Others were perhaps a plea for protection to some special deity, or to ward off certain undesirable underworld characters or dangers. In any case these effigies are among the most charming examples of the ancient Mexican potters' art.

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